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ABSTRACT

This study examined the politics of school-community interaction around a high school construction project, describing the events surrounding one school board's decision to renovate versus rebuild its high school building. The study examined: public involvement in the decision to renovate; the political after-effects of this decision; socioeconomic conditions within the community at the time of perceived need for renovation; how the school board reached the decision to renovate; how the public was involved in the decision to renovate; and the effects of the decision to renovate on the subsequent school board election. Data collection included school board minutes, a school board authorized feasibility study, architectural notes and memos, school build building and maintenance committee minutes, newspaper coverage and reaction to major events, state reports, and minutes of state-required meetings. Interviews were conducted with key participants. Results indicated that the public had input into the decision to renovate. The school community was undergoing socioeconomic changes at the time. Community members believed they did not have enough voice in the process. The renovations project became the main issue in the subsequent school board election. The decision to renovate rather than rebuild was directly responsible for the defeat of three incumbent board members. (Contains 105 bibliographic references.) (SM)

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THE POLITICS OF SCHOOL BOARD-COMMUNITY INTERACTION: A CASE STUDY OF A HIGH SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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by
Patricia A. Schmieg
February 1990

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I share pride in accomplishment with my mother, Winifred M. Schmieg. Her support and encouragement inspired me throughout the completion of this project. She is truly, "The Wind Beneath My Wings."

Finally, I dedicate this work to my father, Harry J. Schmieg (1926-1964). From the day I found his Masters Thesis in the stacks of Paley Library, I was inspired by the thought of having my completed work placed next to his. He gave me more than he ever lived to see.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Education in society today is tied to a multitude of civic decisions. School board members as well as school administrators are now facing a moral obligation to thrust themselves into political action. School officials need to act with skill, insight and commitment in political campaigns deciding issues that affect the total good of the community. School officials - superintendents, board members, central office personnel - can increase the educational opportunities in local districts by knowledgeable and ethical political activity.[1]

Many schools boards today are faced with the decision of whether to renovate existing facilities or to propose new construction to deal with the increasing student population. The desire to provide the best educational program for all the students often justifies costly physical environmental changes. However school boards are also under increasing pressure to renovate their facilities in the most timely and cost effective manner in an effort to be responsive to the desires of the community.

The school board by law represents the community and is responsible for the type of education offered to the children of the school district. "In a representative democracy such as ours the school board member has the responsibility to act for the people. In theory, he represents the will of the people; practically, however, the will of the people is not easy to discover."[2]

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[1] Michael Nunnery and Ralph Kimbrough, Political Power, Polls and School Elections (Berkley, Calif: Mc Cutchan Publishing, 1971), iii.

Pressure groups often present a dilemma to school board members. "The groups which shout the loudest do not necessarily represent the wishes of the majority."[3] The desires of the people which the school board must interpret are manifested in different ways. It is difficult for school board members not to react to the loud noises emanating from the vocal minority when the majority remains silent.

These mixed messages from the public often lead school boards to make decisions that are unpopular with certain segments of the community. The manner in which school officials deal with this type of decision-making may well have an effect on their own political future.

Approximately 85 percent of the school boards in this country are elected.[4] These elections represent the most direct method for the community to exercise control over school boards. Although school board members are more likely to be re-elected than defeated, citizen dissatisfaction with school board policy does, on occasion, lead to incumbent school board member defeat.[5]

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[2] Daniel R. Davies and Fred W. Hosker, The Challenge of School Board Membership (New York: Chartwell House Inc., 1954), 33-34.

[3] Ibid., p. 34.

[4] Charles R. Adrian and Charles Press, Governing Urban America, 3rd edition, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968), 434.

Through an intense examination of a high school construction project, and the interaction of school and community throughout this project, it is hoped that new perspectives can be introduced to all parties involved. For school districts, analysis of some success stories and avoidance of some of the more common pitfalls could improve the likelihood of constructing more functional educational facilities at reduced costs. For school officials such an analysis could pave the way for better school-community relations and a brighter political future.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze the politics of school-community interaction with respect to a high school construction project. Several theoretical perspectives provided the basis for this detailed examination. The study reports on the events surrounding a particular school board's decision to renovate its high school building, and how these events relate to a particular theory of local school governance. Emphasis was placed on how the public was involved in the decision to renovate and the political after-effects of this decision.

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[5] William L. Gaberina, "Public Demand, School Board Response and Incumbent Defeat: An Examination of the Governance of Local School Districts in Massachusetts" (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1975), p. 40.

Need for the Study

One-fourth of the school buildings in twenty eight states are in inadequate condition, according to figures provided by these states in a survey conducted by the National Education Writers Association. New Jersey reported that 20 percent of its buildings were in "inadequate" condition while Pennsylvania said that only one-half of one percent of its schools belonged in that category, even though 34 percent of them were built before World War II.[6]

PlanCon is an acronym for Planning Construction Workbook and is the document for applying for reimbursement for construction projects in the state of Pennsylvania. Parts A and B of PlanCon, completed simultaneously, provide the definition of the proposed project, and the justification of the need for the project.[7] In 1987, seventy-six projects were proposed to the State Department of Education, that is, seventy-six school districts submitted parts A and B of PlanCon. In 1988, the state saw a 109 percent increase as 189 projects were proposed.

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[6] Dale Mezzacappa, "Study Describes Conditions of School Buildings," Philadelphia Inquirer, 9 April 1989: 7A.

[7] Pennsylvania Department of Education, School Construction Laws, Regulations, Standards and Procedures (Harrisburg, PA: n.p., 1988), 4.

School districts that were closing schools are now looking at re-opening facilities, renovating existing schools, and building new construction.

The National Education Writers Association report concluded that "Thousands of school districts face serious facility problems with few resources for long-term or innovative planning that would be more cost-effective and result in better environments for children."[8] It is the local school boards who are faced with the decision of whether to renovate existing buildings or to propose new construction to deal with increasing enrollments. Other pressures include the need to provide additional space for programs mandated by the state and federal government, such as special education and, unforeseen environmental hazards, such as those posed by radon. School boards are also under increasing pressure to renovate their facilities in the most timely and cost-effective manner. Few will refute the need for interaction between the school and the community in making these decisions.

Thus school officials are thrust into a position of having to respond to and work with the public in their day to day decisions. Dynamic leadership of educators and citizens of the community is essential in building a quality educational system. As citizens have demanded inclusion in school affairs, attitudes of school officials toward this increased emphasis on community participation have also changed.

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[8] Ibid.

Until recently, the governance of public education was popularly thought of as separate from the political process. More and more, however, the governance of public education is recognized as a political process.[9] Ralph Kimbrough recognized, "If the educational leader and his staff have any opinions about educational policies and take action accordingly, public education in that school district is involved in politics."[10] Similarly, Roald Campbell et al. stated, "Educational policy making at all governmental levels is immersed in politics and by definition educational policy making is political action."[11] Roscoe Martin agreed that

> Politics may be taken to concern (1) the process of governance within the schools , (2) the process by which the schools are controlled by and held responsible to people, or (3) the process of decision-making as it relates to other governments....Politics, therefore, may be said to be essentially a way of looking at the public school system and its management.[12]

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[9] Allen W. Moen, Public Participation in Local School Districts, ed. Frank W. Lutz and Laurence Iannaccone (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1978), 33.

[10] Ralph B. Kimbrough, op. cit., p. 275.

[11] Roald Campbell, Luvern Cunningham, and Roderick McPhee, The Organization and Control of American Schools (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books Inc., 1965), 404.

[12] Roscoe C. Martin, Government and the Suburban School, The Economics and Politics of Public Education Series, Vol. II (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962). 53-57.

There is a need, therefore, to look at school districts as political entities. The school board, as one of the most important formal policy-determining bodies of the community, should be the focal point of such research. A number of studies were undertaken at the Claremont Graduate School to formulate and test a general theory of school district politics. The Claremont studies focused on the defeat of incumbent school board members and were based on an explanatory model suggested by Laurence Iannaccone and Frank Lutz. One of the verification studies done by John C. Walden suggests that incumbent defeat is not only related to the political stability of the school district, but is also a reflection of a stuggle for power between an incumbent power group and an emergent one.[13] The model goes on to claim that these socio-political changes within the community will result in a school board that will become closed to inputs from its public. Having little or no influence on the present school board and seeing no apparent opportunity to change that situation, the public will become sufficiently dissatisfied and turn to the ballot box in an effort to unseat an incumbent and elect a board member who represents the public's opinion. This represents the focal point of the dissatisfaction theory of democratic participation in school governance.[14]

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[13] John C. Walden, "School Board Changes and Involuntary Superintendent Turnover," (Ph.D. diss., The Claremont Graduate School, 1966), p. 79.

In no way do these studies justify the conclusion that the local district "must go" because it cannot or does not change educationally to meet its citizens' demands. However, knowledge and better understanding of these patterns could result in better training of boards and superintendents. Awareness of these patterns can confirm the capacity of local school districts to change themselves. Such awareness may produce early adjustments to educational programs and educational decision-making, and serve to put them more in line with the needs and aspirations of the community.[15]

Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated as part of this study:

1. What socioeconomic conditions were present within the community at the time of the perceived need for a renovations project?

2. How did the School Board reach the decision to renovate the high school building as opposed to building a new high school?

    2a. What conditions were present which led the school board to the perceived need for a building project?

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[14] Frank W. Lutz and Laurence Iannaccone, ed., Public Participation in Local School Districts (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1978), 107.

[15] Laurence Iannaccone, Politics in Education (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education Inc., 1967), 98.

2b. What procedures were used to verify the need for a building project?

3. How was the public involved in the decision to renovate the high school building as opposed to building a new high school?

3a. What procedures did the school district use to solicit public participation in the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school?

3b. How did the public become involved in the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school?

3c. At what level did the public participate in the decision to renovate according to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation.[16]

4. What effects did the decision to renovate have on the School Board Election of November, 1987, as perceived by the successful incumbent, the defeated incumbents and the successful non-incumbent candidates.

4a. Was the renovation project an issue in the School Board Election of November, 1987, as perceived by the successful incumbent, the defeated incumbents, and the successful non-incumbent candidates?

4b. Was the decision to renovate the high school directly responsible for the defeat of three incumbent school board members in the School Board Election of November, 1987, as perceived by the successful incumbent, the defeated incumbents and the successful non-incumbent candidates?

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[16] Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, July 1969: 217.

Delimitations

This case study was limited to an intense examination of one school district in the suburbs of a major city in the Mid-Atlantic region. The investigation covered approximately a four year period of time from March, 1985, to March 1989.

The study was limited to a single school district, to be called the Sherwood School District. The student population of the Sherwood School District at the beginning of the 1988-89 school year was 4,676. The total assessment for the district for the same school year was eighty four million dollars. According to the district Long Range Plan and based on the 1980 Census Data Summary, the district is 98.4 percent white, the average income per family is $24,144 and 63.8 percent of the population are high school graduates.

The study was limited to a single School Board Election, that of November 1987. This study centered on the perceptions of key participants in the high school construction project and a compilation of the historical record of events. The political ramifications of the project was the focus of the study. The name of the district and the names of all persons interviewed have been changed so that the confidentiality of the school district personnel was maintained.

Internal validity, error control, was ensured by triangulation, using multiple participants, sources of data or methods to confirm emerging findings. Another strategy used was to take data and interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and to ask them if the results were plausible. In terms of internal validity dealing with the question of how one's findings match reality, most agree that internal validity is a definite strength of qualitative research.[17]

In a qualitative case study, the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing all data. The researcher is currently an administrator in the district which is under study. As Goetz and Le Compte observe, case study research "is one of the few modes of scientific study that admit the subjective perception and biases of both participants and researcher into the research frame."[18] All research has its boases. The researcher feels confident that her awaremess of investigator bias has helped her to deal with this limitation inherent in this type of research.

Reliability, in terms of consistency, is problematic in the social sciences because it is based on the assumption that there is a single reality. Qualitative research seeks to describe and explain reality as those who view it interpret it. Lincoln and Guba suggest thinking about "consistency" of the results obtained from the data. "That is, rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, one wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense - they are consistent and dependable."[19]

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[17] Sharan B. Merriam, Case Study Research in Education (London: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), 166-170.

[18] J. P. Goetz and M. D. Le Compte, Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research (Orlando, Fla: Academic Press, 1984), 95.

External validity, generalization, is sometimes noted as a limitation of the case study method. However, one selects a case study approach "because one wishes to understand the particular in depth, not because one wants to know what is generally true of the many."[20] Wilson proposes that "generalizability is ultimately related to what the reader is trying to learn from the case study."[21] This reader or user generalizability involves "leaving the extent to which a study's findings apply to other situations up to the people in those situations."[22]

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following operational definitions were used:

Act 34--requirement of a school board in the State of Pennsylvania, when it plans construction of new school facilities or a substantial addition (more than 20 percent of area and replacement value) to an existing building, to follow specified procedures and to observe established cost limits.[23]

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[19] E. G. Guba and Y. S. Lincoln, Effective Evaluation, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981), 288.

[20] Merriam, op. cit., p. 173.

[21] S. Wilson, "Explorations of the Usefulness of Case Study Evaluations," Evaluation Quarterly 3 (1979): 454.

[22] Ibid.

Assessed Valuation--the official valuation of property for the purpose of taxation.[24]

Building Project--new school buildings, additions to existing buildings, changes involving the total number of instructional spaces, changes in dimensions of any instructional space, relocation of any instructional space which requires physical changes or affects capacity, changes in general office area, changes to existing-facilities and major repairs.[25]

Construction Project--all activities or processes involved in the erection of school buildings.[26]

Incumbent Candidate--a political candidate who holds the office for which he/she is running.

Net Average Membership--aggregate number of school days represented by all pupils on the active roll divided by the number of days school is in session.[27] Average Daily Attendance.

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[23] Pennsylvania Department of Education, Act 34 Information for Public Hearing Referendum (Harrisburg, PA: n.p., 1980), 1.

[24] Understanding School Finances (New Cumberland, Pa: Pa School Boards Association, 1987), 167.

[25] Basil Castaldi, Educational Facilities (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1987), 362.

[26] Carter V. Good, Dictionary of Education, 3rd ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 131.

Politics--includes the making of governmental decisions, and the effort or struggle to gain or keep power to make these decisions.[28]

Politics of Education--the process of making basic educational decisions of local district-wide, state-wide or nation-wide significance.[29]

Public Participation--citizens sharing in decisions affecting their community.[30]

Renovations Project--extensive remodeling or reshaping of existing spaces within a school, restoring to their original state or improving the structure and/or service equipment of a school.[31]

School Board--the governing body of the local government entity known as the school district.[32]

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[27] Understanding School Finances (New Cumberland, Pa: Pa School Boards Association, 1987), 167.

[28] Thomas E. Eliot, "Towards an Understanding of Public School Politics," The American Political Science Review, Dec., 1959: 1036.

[29] Ralph B. Kimbrough, Political Power and Educational Decision Making (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1964), 274.

[30] Edmund M. Burke, "Citizen Participation Strategies," Journal of the American Institute of Planners 10, no. 5 Sept., 1968): 287.

[31] Basil Castaldi, Creative Planning of Educational Facilities (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1969), 309.

[32] Keith Goldhammer, The School Board (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1964), 24.

School Board Member--a bona fide resident who satisfies state eligibility requirements and has been elected by the people or appointed by the remaining members of the board to serve on the board of education.[33]

School-Community Interaction--a process that permits schools to communicate information of importance to members of their respective communities and vise-versa.[34]

School District--the basic unit of local educational government with substantial responsibility for finance as well as nearly complete authority in regard to educational personnel.[35]

Superintendent--the local chief school administrator of a public school district.[36]

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter has included the following sections: introduction, statement of the problem, need for the study, research questions, delimitations of the study and definitions. The second chapter presents a review of related research in the areas of school construction projects, public participation, and politics of school-community interaction. The third chapter describes, in detail, the procedures used in the study including research design, data collection and treatment of the data. The fourth chapter presents the data including a chronological compilation of the historic record and a summary of the interviews conducted. The fifth chapter includes the summary, conclusions and recommendations for further study. The remainder of the study contains the appendices and the bibliography.

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[33] Robert R. Hamilton and E. Edmund Reutter, Jr., Legal Aspects of School Board Operations (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teacher College, Columbia University, 1958), 125.

[34] Edward L. Dejnonka and David E. Kapel, American Educator's Encyclopedia (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), 459.

[35] Forsten Husen and T. Neville Portlethwaite, The International Encyclopedia of Education, (New York: Per Gamon Press, 1985), 4413.

[36] Good, op. cit., p. 289.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Research

This section provides a review of the research relevant to school construction projects, public participation and the politics of school-community interaction. It is divided into three parts.

School Construction Projects

The history of educational planning in the United States is reflective of the American people's desire to provide an education for their children. Even the one room schoolhouse, crude by today's standards, with its limited space and sparse furnishings, represented an innovative and practical solution in relation to the times and circumstances.[37]

In 1880 Louis Sullivan coined the phrase "Form Follows Function" which has exemplified the planning of school buildings ever since. Over one hundred years later Sullivan's words still ring true. In the 1990's and in the future, educational planners will face additional challenges in ensuring that facilities respond to programmatic needs and that they are flexible enough to accommodate future programs.

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[37] council of Facility Planners, Guide for Planning Educational Facilities (Columbus, Ohio: n.p., 1985), A-2.

> Educational facilities have evolved from the simple concept of the one-room schoolhouse to the well designed environments that are common today. Better technology, new building materials, new concepts of design and the evaluation of theories and practices of teaching and learning have all played a part in the progression. The critical element, however, has and will continue to be people: educators, facility planning specialists, architects, engineers, social scientists, designers, manufacturers and other experts who are continually working for and achieving improvements in the planning, design, construction and equipping of educational facilities.[38]

The Council of Educational Facility Planners, however, omitted other groups of very important people from the list above. In educational planning and initiating building projects few will refute the need to involve as many individuals as possible, including school board members, community members, professional and service staff members and students. Griffen suggests that a committee be formed which starts with the question, "What and how do we want to teach?" and then sets out to find the architectural solutions to this question.[39]

The Connecticut Department of Education suggests that the local School Board of Education be named as the building committee because it already knows what the district wants and needs. The Department recommends:

> The committee is to provide the needed facilities in accordance with the educational specifications

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[38] Ibid. p. A-5.

[39] C. W. Griffen Jr., Systems: An Approach to School Construction (ERIC, ED 050 475, 1971), 6.

> and within such limitations as may be imposed by the municipal governing body, to expend the appropriate funds wisely so as to secure the best possible long term value for the community.[40]

As in most states, the bulk of school construction costs in Pennsylvania and New Jersey is paid for by the local communities rather than by the state. Because school budgets and bond issues must be approved by voters in New Jersey, maintenance and building needs are frequently not addressed.

> In Pennsylvania, the state's share of school construction costs declined markedly between 1985 and 1988. While local districts increased their construction expenditures from $18 million in 1985 and $291 million in 1988, the state outlay during that period declined from $142 million to $132 million.[41]

The State of Pennsylvania now subsidizes debt-service payments on loans taken out for construction by school districts, however it does not help subsidize repairs or rehabilitation of old buildings.[42] The State of Pennsylvania does not require local voter approval of bond issues for construction as in some states.

In a study of the techniques involved in developing a campaign for a local bond referendum for school construction in North Carolina, Probst found input from the public to be most important. The Superintendents surveyed perceived that the most effective election strategies were: use of Citizens' Advisory Committee, use of P.T.A organizations, call for election within three months of the first public announcement of the need for the bond issue, and the use of local newspapers and a speakers' bureau as effective media techniques. Probst's recommendations as a result of this study included making a thorough study of the community attitudes, forming a Citizens' Advisory Committee and seeking the endorsement and the support of local P.T.A organizations before attempting a school bond campaign.[43]

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[40] Connecticut Department of Education, School Building Project Procedures. A Guide to the School Building Committee (ERIC, ED 037 009, 1967), 29-30.

[41] Mezzacappa, op. cit.

[42] Ibid.

Boss and Thomas conducted a similiar bond issue survey of New York State voters. They found that 75 percent of the respondents said they were influenced in some way by circulars mailed to them. Not all of the voters were influenced, however, toward the position suggested in the circulars. Voters favorable to the bond issue indicated that inadequacy of the facilities influenced them the most.[44]

After the defeat of a bond referendum in New Jersey, a door-to-door survey of the community was conducted by a Citizens Education Study Committee. More than 1300 homes were visited but responses were obtained from only 866.

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[43] Probst, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

[44] LaVerne H. Boss and Michael Thomas, "Bond Issue Survey: Mail Campaigns Pay Off," Nation's Schools, April 1968: 71-82.

More than 70 percent of the respondents said they voted against the tax rate. Only 6 percent of the respondents thought the new school was not needed, but they felt that even though the new building was necessary, they could not pay for it. Only 1237 voters went to the polls in that election, representing only a small percentage of the registered voters. The superintendent reported that the lack of voter response was the major reason for the defeat. The superintendent said most voters claimed that they wanted more information about the proposal and enrollment projections. Yet, specific information had been previously provided in school publications, newspaper articles, and paid newspaper advertisements. The chairman of the citizens committee blamed community apathy for the defeat.[45]

Often school boards face difficulty in making the decision of whether, or when to renovate. Reasons range from educational to financial. Cramer noted that junior high pupils housed in a renovated school scored significantly higher on an inventory to measure attitudes toward their school building than pupils housed in an "old dilapidated facility".[46] Sampson pointed out that the sale price of residential property grew at a faster rate around three recycled educational facilities than in areas where the three elementary schools maintained their primary public school function.[47]

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[45] New Jersey Urban Schools Development Council, Blueprint for Education Legislation (Trenton, NJ: State of New Jersey, 1969), 67.

[46] Robert Joseph Cramer, "Some Effects of School Building Renovation on Pupil Attitudes and Behavior in Selected Junior High Schools," DAI 37 (1976): 4735A.

Surprisingly, new construction may cost less than an extensive renovation when considering the life span of an existing building. An accepted guideline is that the cost of a renovation project should not exceed 50 percent of the cost of comparable new construction.[48]

Beehrman studied the effects of a change from an older school building to a newly constructed school building. He concluded from his study that the self-concept-as-a-learner scores for the vocational-technical high school students improved when they moved from an older school building to a newly constructed vocational-technical high school building. At the end of eight months of educational activities in the newly constructed building, these students generally perceived themselves as more motivated, more task oriented, better at problem solving and more a member of the class than they did in the older school building.[49]

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[47] John W. Sampson, "The Economic Impact Created by Recycling Through Renovation, Remodeling and Conversion of Educational Facilities Upon an Urban Community's Property Tax Base," DAI 41 (1980): 1883A.

[48] Bruce A. Jilk, "Boomers' Kids Pose New Construction Questions," The School Administrator, June 1987:15.

[49] Henry D. Beehrman Jr., "The Effects of a Change from an Older School Building to a Newly Constructed School Building on the Self-Concept as a Learner of High School Students (Ed. D. diss., Penn State Univ., 1971), p. 100.

Sometimes the decision to be made is whether to renovate or to start new construction at all. Lo Presti found that involvement of all segments of the community was the major factor in moving the decision-makers in Waltham, Massachusetts from a pre-1972 adversarial position to a post-1972 position of cooperation with respect to a city-wide school renewal.[50]

The degree to which the school board is sensitive to public pressure may cause delays in the construction process. If this sensitivity takes the form of indecisiveness, delays in the decision-making process during the design development phase can result in substantial increases in total project expenditures.[51]

In a study of construction referenda in New York State, Switts explained:

> construction referendum that experiences initial rejection and subsequent approval is most apt to cost the taxpayer more money for a building which would serve the same number of students as was provided for at the time of initial submission. Hence, the taxpayer, by seeking a "no" vote to curtail rising costs and taxes, tended to achieve the opposite effect.[52]

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[50] Joseph D. LoPresti, "The Decision-Making Process of School Plant Renewal and Consolidation: A Case Study," DAI 37 (1976): 742A.

[51] "The Skyrocketing Cost of School Construction," School Management, July 1969: 38.

[52] Harold E. Switts, "An Investigation of the Relationship of School Construction Costs and Local Voter Rejection and Subsequent Approval of Public School Construction Referenda in New York State," DAI 35 (1974): 5749A.

In a similar study of bond referenda for school construction in North Carolina, Propst suggested that "superintendents perceived the 'need of the facility proposed' and a 'good publicity program' as being the two most important factors in the success of school bond elections".[53] School boards may find that cooperative establishment of need for the renovation or new construction may result in better acceptance of the plan.

J. Aaron Bowman, a communication consultant has analyzed the twelve most common reasons bond issues fail. Bowman stated that a sure-fire way to lose a school finance campaign is to announce to the people a split vote by the school board in support of the bond issue. Such a split is the "kiss of death" according to Bowman. Even one board member opposing a bond issue, he says, raises credibility questions with the public, who think there must be something wrong.[54]

Good planning takes time but it also pays off in the end result. Sufficient time taken in both educational planning and architectural planning can "make the difference between a pedestrian 'hackneyed' solution to your community's problem and a brilliant design of long lasting value at reasonable initial and operating costs".[55]

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[53] Julius L. Propst, "A Study of the Technique Involved in Developing a Campaign for Local Bond Referendum for School Construction in North Carolina," DAI 38 (1977): 7067A.

[54] J. Aaron Bowman, "How to Lose Your Next Referendum," American School Board Journal, March 1970: 48-48.

The research reviewed revealed a definite awareness of the need for public input and public relations measures when entering into a construction project. As project funding for renovations and new construction projects is often limited by a variety of constraints, school boards would be wise to examine alternative techniques in the educational planning and school building processes. Community involvement and careful planning may be helpful in putting the school board on the path to a successful building project. The research was lacking in studies which followed up on projects which did or did not include public input. Although there was much in the literature on successful and non-successful bond campaigns, little was said of school boards who supported these campaigns. What happens to school board members who support unpopular construction projects? As school boards attempt to respond to the various demands of the school community with construction projects, a closer review of some of the pitfalls of past construction projects is in order to avoid these problems in the future.

Public Participation

Arnstein quipped, "The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you."[56] Public participation in their government is in theory, the cornerstone of democracy. It is a revered idea that is applauded by everyone. However, from theory to practice some of the applause may be reduced to polite handclaps.

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[55] Connecticut Department of Education, School Building Project Procedures. A Guide to the School Building Committee (ERIC, ED 037 009, 1967), p. 24.

The value of public participation in educational decision making is found throughout the literature. Cahn and Cahn proposed that citizen participation can be "A means of mobilizing unutilized resources - a source of productivity and labor not otherwise tapped."[57] Citizens can play an important role in monitoring what the schools do. Public participation can build support and confidence in the schools and will often result in promoting what schools are doing. Public participation thus makes sense from a public relations point of view.[58]

Citizen participation has been shaped largely by the "community relations" movement in school administration. This movement was based on the professional view that the citizen was to be utilized to support the professional's expertise. Dady expressed the restoration of faith in public schools in terms of a "national priority," and offered two tools which could help in the restoration: public information and public participation.[59]

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[56] Sherry R. Arnstein, op. cit., p. 216.

[57] Edgar C. Cahn and Jean Cahn, "Maximum Feasible Participation, "A Citizen Participation: Effecting Community Change, ed. Edgar S. Cahn and Barry A. Passett (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971) 16.

[58] Ralph Turlington, Proceedings of the First Statewide Conference on Citizen Participation in Education, March 21-22, 1980.

Critics of the schools continually call for more participation by parents. In the 20th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, public school parents were asked the following question for the first time:

> To what degree do the local public schools attempt to attract participation by parents in school affairs? A great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or not at all?[60]

While 25 percent of parents believe that the schools put forth a "great deal of effort" to involve parents, 49 percent said "a fair amount of effort" is put forth. The percentage of parents who feel "not very much effort" is put forth is twenty and 2 percent feel the schools do not put forth any effort at all.[61]

Often the responsibility of communicating with the public falls on the school administration. Wood, Nicholson, and Findley feel strongly that the key to principals' survival is in their ability to communicate with the school's constituents. The burden of that communication rests on the school's public relations program. They see the principal as the "major source of information regarding school programs and activities".[62] According to Dapper, most superintendents lose their job not because of academic incompetence but because of their inability to deal effectively deal with the community.[63]

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[59] Milan B. Dady, "Improving School-Community Relations," Journal of Research and Development in Educarion, Winter 1972:91.

[60] Alec M. Gallup and Stanley M. Elam, "The 20th Annual Gallop Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, Sept. 1988: 42.

[61] Ibid.

Burke saw a basic conflict between the demand for participatory democracy and professional expertise in decision making. Although he believed that citizens should share in decisions affecting their destinies, he admitted that citizens cannot participate in all decision making functions. He suggested instead five "strategies" for citizen participation. Only one of the five "strategies" dealt with any actual public power in shaping community decisions.[64] Thus again, there is a gap between optimum participation and the reality of practice.

Bozza studied the management of political conflict arising from declining enrollment and school closings. The data of his study supported the statement that more frequent interaction of the school board and superintendent with community leaders was found in districts where minimal conflict was experienced in the closing of a school due to declining enrollment. This interaction with community leaders occurred primarily with school board members rather than with the superintendent. In addition, the level of positive sentiment expressed by the community leaders toward the chief school administrator and the board of education was found to be high in districts where minimal community conflict was experienced in the closing of a school.[65]

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[62] C. L. Wood, E. Nicholson and D. G. Findley, The Secondary School Principal: Manager and Supervisor (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1979), 72.

[63] Gloria Dapper, Public Relations for Educators (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1964), 10.

[64] Edmund M. Burke, op. cit., p. 287.

In a national survey of the attitudes of school board members toward community participation Meyer found evidence to support the fact that most school boards believed strongly in community participation. Of the respondents, 79.1 percent expressed belief in involvement of community advisory groups in deciding on the educational objectives of the district. Also 77.8 percent of the respondents believed in involvement of community advisory groups in the areas of construction, renovation or closing of schools. Although most of the respondents, or 54.9 percent, reported that the community should be involved and delegated responsibility for decision making in construction, renovation or closing of schools, another 23.5 percent reported that the community should be involved, but the respondents were not willing to delegate responsibility.[66]

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[65] Richard C. Bozza, "Declining Enrollments and School Closing: The Management of Political Conflict"(Ed.D diss., Rutgers State University of New Jersey, 1985), p. 140.

In a study of high schools in Arizona, Dumond found that community pressures forced school boards to modify educational policies recommended by authorities in the field of secondary education. He also found evidence to support the fact that pressure groups have been formed in many school districts because good communication was lacking. Too often school administrators had consulted patrons of the local district only in times of stress.[67]

Individual citizens, may vary in the amount of influence they exert on decision making. Some citizens act on their convictions; others remain passive. There is a difference, however difficult to distinguish, between the opinions of the total citizenry and opinions of the sub-publics which exert varying amounts of influence.

Almond presented a model which divided the general citizen population into various categories based on their participation and influence in public political issues. Almond assumed that society is complex with many public, political issues. He also assumed that a person can only pay attention to a limited number of issues. Each person must pick and choose which issues he/she will attend to and become informed about. It is this distribution of the general citizen population that forms the basis of the various "publics" within society.[68]

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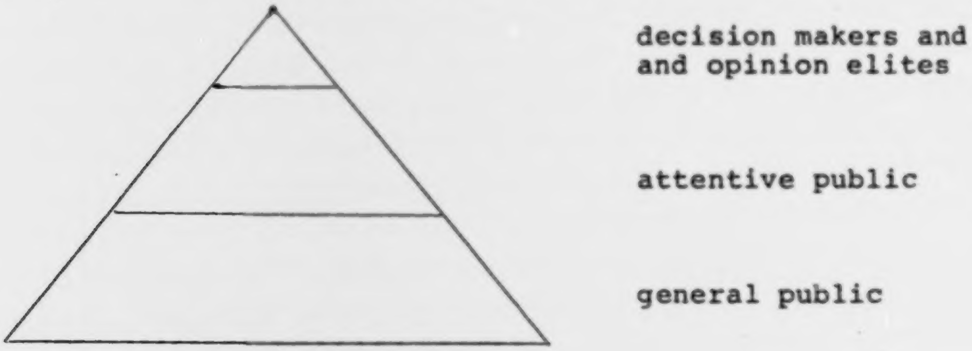
[66] James A. Meyer, "National Survey of the Attitudes of School Board Members Toward Community Participation - Community Control" (Ed.D diss., Virginia Polytech Institute and State Univ., 1982), p. 106.

[67] Jack W. Dumond, "Analysis of School Board Policy Decisions in Selected Arizona Public School Districts as they Relate to Community Pressure" (Ph.D diss., Univ. of Arizona, 1964), p. 75.

Almond asserted that for any political issue each member of the general citizen population falls into one of three groups. These groups form a hierarchy that has a pyramid shape. (see figure 1).

Figure 1. The Stratification of Public Opinion



The first and largest group, labeled the general public, forms the base of the pyramid. Individuals within this group are neither interested in nor informed about the political issue in question; neither do they participate in the political process. The second group is the attentive public. Members of this group are both informed about and interested in the political issue in question. They actively follow an issue, but they may not necessarily participate actively in the political process. The decision-makers and opinion elites, as Almond called the third group, are the policy bearing stratum of the population. Members of this group are elected or appointed officials, professionals within organizations or people with personal followings (prominent clergymen, etc.)[69]

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[68] G. A. Almond, The American People and Foreign Policy (New York: Harcourt, Brace 1950), 54.

According to Almond, public policy is formulated within this structure. When agreement has been reached by the decision makers, there is no wider public participation in the process. When disagreements occur among the opinion elites one or more segments of the leadership group may directly appeal to the attentive public. On other occasions, if the initial attempts to mobilize the attentive public are insufficient in bringing about the desired change, the elites may appeal to the general public. For any given issue, public opinion, attitude and influence will form a heirarchy. The relative size of the various groups will differ from issue to issue. While movement among the groups is possible it is easier to move from the general public to the attentives, than from the attentives to the elites.[70]

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

Leathem adapted Almond's model and did a study on the "attentive public" for local school politics. His research led to the following implications for local school officials:

> Communication efforts by local school officials should focus on attentives to local school politics. Public relations efforts should be primarily directed toward parents of school age children and toward members of civic, community or other organizations. Parental status and organizational activity were found to have the closest association with attentiveness.
>
> In conducting school referenda or other voting campaigns, local school officials should center their efforts on attentives, parents of school age children, and citizens between the ages of thirty and forty nine. Citizens with these characteristics are most likely to vote in state and local elections.[71]

Leathem also recommended that local school officials should contact attentives and citizens with college degrees. These people can be used to mobilize citizen support for a tax referendum, bond issue or other school related voting issues. He summarized that local school officials should contact attentives and parents whenever major policy changes are being considered or when basic support for increased educational expenditures is sought.[72]

Salisbury found community size to be inversely related to the rate of citizen participation. Large school systems, like large organizations, seem to depress participation because citizens don't know where to turn when complaints arise. He found that in larger communities, where the school board is appointed, school issues were a part of larger community political issues, and school administrators were viewed as aloof, remote specialists.[73]

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[71] Paul J. Leathem, "The Attentive Public for Local School Politics "(Ed.D diss., North Illinois Univ, 1985), P. 261.

[72] Ibid., p. 262.

Arnstein takes the concept of public participation further than just seeking opinions or soliciting support. She equates citizen participation with citizen power. Arnstein explains:

> There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participating and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process....It [citizen participation] allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit.[74]

However, one of the most significant roadblocks to achieving genuine levels of citizen participation is resistance to power redistribution. What happens when the powerholders resist pressures from the public to include citizens in decisions which affect them? What resources can the public utilize in order to have their voices heard?

George Gallup wrote, "Democracy works best when it responds to the views of an informed citizenry. And only when the people formulate opinions on the basis of facts can they be informed."[75] In order to gain support from the community, the community must be, not only informed, but also involved in the planning process. Evidence supports the fact that information and involvement create interest, and interest leads to support.[76]

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[73] R.H. Salisbury, "Modes of Participation and Policy Impact in American Education," International Journal of Political Education, November 1979: 310.

[74] Arnstein, op. cit., p. 216.

Classical democratic theorist J.S. Mill argues that participation in democratic institutions is seen as necessary in the development of those qualities that make for effective citizenship. Mill asserted that each citizen can only learn democracy by participating at the local level. Isolated political acts, such as voting, do not strengthen citizenship. If citizens are to learn to govern themselves, they must participate at the local level. Without participation, individuals cannot learn the skills of citizenship, and institutions will not reflect the will of the majority of the public.[77]

Hilldrup asserts that everything the schools do - or don't do - has the potential to become a political issue. "Just because something was not an issue this year doesn't mean it won't be one next year, particularly if there's an election."[78] Hilldrup reasons:

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[75] George Gallup, "The Public Looks at the Public Schools," Today's Education, Sept-Oct 1975: 19.

[76] Thomas F. Jenkins, "School-Community Relations: Two-Way Communication Preferences of Parents of Secondary School Students" (Ed. D.Diss., Temple University, 1976), p. 25.

[77] J.S. Mill, An Essay on Government (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1955), 43.

> To say that schools can exist separately from the political process is as ridiculous as saying that a citizen who never votes is not affected by government. The difference between the two is that one who never votes abdicates any right he might have for influencing his own future, while the other, by participating, obtains some postive sway over things.[79]

We can say, therefore, that public education cannot and does not exist in a vacuum. The manner in which school officials deal with this cry of the citizens for more participation may well have an effect on their own political future.

The Politics of School-Community Interaction

"Politics should be kept out of education. Education should be kept out of politics....while both are accepted views, neither is accurate nor possible."[80] Politics is "the democratic process of making significant decisions in the school district, the state and the nation."[81] Each time educators take action to influence educational policy they are involved in politics. When school officials desire changes in school programs, they must be good politicians. "Performing as a politician to develop quality schools is a perfectly legitimate, statesmanlike activity."[82]

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[78] Robert P. Hilldrup, Improving School Public Relations (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1982), 112.

[79] Ibid.

[80] M. Locke, Power and Politics in the School System: A Guide Book (London: Routeledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), vii.

[81] Nunnery, op. cit., p. 1.

For most of its history, education in the United States has been a state function administered through local school districts. This arrangement has fostered public awareness of the uniqueness of educational governing. School board members are generally elected by the citizens of the school district. School boards have the legal power and obligation to provide for the public education of the children of the school district. In discharging these and other responsibilities, school board members are politicians and the school board is a unit of government. Thus, the politics of local school district elections lie at the heart of policy making in public education at the local level.[83]

Leathem did an analysis of the characteristics of voters, as opposed to non-voters, in the hope of yielding variables associated with overall "attentiveness" to local school political issues. Leathem observed:

> Analysis of voter data is also further compounded by variables related specifically to the local district in which the studies are conducted. School districts vary considerably in the intensity of their local issues. In the presence of inflammatory local issues such as school closings or desegregation, many voters will be drawn to the polls who would not ordinarily vote. In these situations it is difficult to discriminate between those citizens who were truly

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Laurence Iannaccone and Frank W. Lutz, Politics, Power and Policy: The Governing of Local School Districts (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1970), 9.

> attentive to local school politics from those who were drawn into the controversy through a general arousal of mass public opinion.[84]

The study of elections and voting behaviors should lead to a better understanding of that process. How voters can change policy output should be of great concern. Herein lies the question: Is the governance of public education democratic?[85]

There are at least three approaches which attempt to answer this question. All three are concerned with the basic questions of control of local school district policy and operations. They vary in their judgement that the key actors deserving attention are the district's citizens, the school board, and school administrators. Above all, they are interested in the issue of whether the local school district is democratic. At that point it becomes clear that each school of thought is using different criterion for democratic government because of their respective definitions of democracy: representation, participation or dissatisfaction. The three conceptualizations, shaped by research on local school district politics are: (1) a decision output theory, (2) a continuous competition theory, and (3) a dissatisfaction theory.[86]

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[84] Leathem, op. cit., p. 60.

[85] Frank W. Lutz and Lee-Yen Wang, Predicting Public Dissatisfaction: A study of School Board Member Defeat (ERIC, ED 254 945, 1985), 3.

Decision Output Theory

The decision output theory is primarily concerned with responsiveness called "representation" of the political system of education to public needs or demands. The theory proclaims that democracy is a matter of the degree of congruence between the demands of the people and the board's policy decisions.[87] It is based on the work of David Easton, who applied a basic general systems framework to the political process.

Easton considered a local school district as an open political system in the sense that it is exposed, in varying degrees, to the events that occur in its environment. Researchers have measured the nature of demands made on school boards (inputs) against school board decisions (outputs). According to Easton,

> the inputs of demands and support sum up and reflect the changes taking place in the environment of a political system, communicate these changes as disturbances to the system, and in turn are acted upon by the system as a way of coping with potential stress.[88]

Easton also considered the processes through which the policy decisions (outputs) influence the level of support for the system. He states:

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[86] Frank W. Lutz and Laurence Iannaccone, Public Participation in Local School Districts (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath & Co., 1978). 124.

[87] Frederick Wirt and Michael Kirst, The Political Web of American Schools (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972) 24.

[88] David Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1965) 117.

> If outputs are to have any impact on support, in one way or another they must be able to meet the existing or anticipated demands of the members of a system. They will do this either by modifying environmental or intrasystem conditions so that the original circumstances that gave rise to the demands no longer exist, or they may take steps to create this impression in the minds of the members, even though in fact nothing other than the image has been changed. Failing this, the authorities through the outputs may coerce the members into continuing to support a system even though no efforts are made to satisfy their demands.[89]

If education exists in a political climate, the local educational issues ultimately are political issues. A characteristic of American political theory is the belief that public policy is brought about by the demands of interested citizens. These demands arise from and are shaped by public opinions, beliefs and interests. A fundamental assumption to the American political system is that individual citizens will to some extent become active, and through that activity they will create the demands that are a necessary condition for public policy outcomes.[90]

Wirt and Kirst drew upon Easton's conceptual model. Their primary concern was with the product of political and administrative decision-making: system outputs and their outcomes. These researchers focused on the correspondence between the demands upon the board and the board's policy decisions.

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[89] Ibid., p. 127.

[90] David Easton, A Systems Analysis of Political Life (New York: Wiley, 1965), 43.

As decision output theorists collect their data on the school board decision-making process, such demand-response occurrences become their data pool. These data demonstrate that it is an infrequent occurrence when a person or group comes to the board with a demand and actually receives a meaningful and positive decision.

> Holding that in a democracy people can affect their outcomes - the decisions of the government, and given the empirical reality that school boards often fail to do what the individual or group demands - decision output theorist claim that the local school boards are not democratic.[91]

Continuous Competition Theory

Those espousing the continuous competition theory hold that the essence of democracy is continuous and universal participation in political decisions. The work of David Minar and more recently that of Harmon Zeigler and Kent Jennings rely upon the continuous competition theory of democratic politics to guide their research questions and methods.

Minar directed his attention to school-community conflict, which he viewed as produced primarily by variations in social class characteristics and the heterogeneity of district populations. In his study of forty-eight suburban elementary school districts in Cook

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[91] Frank W. Lutz, "Local School Board Decision-Making," Education and Urban Society 12 (Aug. 1980): 452.

County, Illinois, his data supported the statement that communities with higher levels of better educated people are low-conflict communities, because they are communities with larger supplies of conflict-management skills and the attitudes that go along with them. However, when the community is agitated by an issue, others tend to be drawn in, the level of participation and dissent tends to be raised, and the situation tends to take on more aspects of conflict.[92]

Minar defined "conflict" or "dissent" as the proportion of "no" votes on a bond and tax referenda combined with percentage of votes cast for losers in school board elections. He found that districts with high levels of voter participation were also those with high levels of dissent.[93]

Foremost in the recent application of continuous competition theory to the examination of local school board decision-making behavior is the work of Zeigler and Jennings. They found three issues which appear to emerge as of primary importance for political scientist using this theory: (1) the universal and continuous participation of the public, usually through the vehicle of interest group participation in decisions; (2) the representativeness of the school board members' points of view on issues as responding to citizen interest within their districts; and (3) the ability of the board and superintendent to develop policy that is responsive to different values and demands.[94]

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[92] David W. Minar, "The Community Basis of Conflict in School System Politics," American Sociological Review 31 (Dec., 1966): 822.

[93] David W. Minar, Educational Decision-Making in Suburban Communities (Evanston, Northwestern University, 1966), 72.

Zeigler et. al. continue to investigate the role of public participation and school board response. In a nine month study which incorporated both systematic observation of events and periodic recording of participants' perceptions, Zeigler studied the notion of school boards "doing what the people want." He discovered:

> Most board members regard the appropriate mode of governance as that of trustee. That is to say, they do not believe they should represent the public's opinion uncritically. They see themselves as best serving the public by acting in accordance with their own judgement (the public, incidentally, disagrees). However, our evidence indicates that their own judgement is most often out of harmony with the views of the public. Boards do not do what "the people" want because (1) they do not believe they should, (2) they do not know what the people want, and (3) even if they did, they probably would not modify their views.[95]

Tucker and Zeigler remonstrated this position that school officials are not particularly responsive to citizen input. They labeled the most common decision-making style as heirarchical. Under this style, most decisions were made by the superintendent and his/her staff, using their own professional values and expertise. School boards were used by superintendents for communication links with the public, not as decision-making bodies. Communication with the lay public was viewed as unnecessary.[96]

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[94] L. Harmon Zeigler and M. Kent Jennings, Governing American Schools (North Scituate, MA: Duxbury Press, 1974).

[95] L. Harmon Zeigler, What Makes School Boards Effective? (ERIC, ED 123 746, 1976), 11.

Continuous competition theorists also found that in most cases, school boards will elect to follow the leadership of the superintendent. Often, they do so at the expense of representing the public.[97] These researchers see the board's true function as "legitimating policies of the school's professional elite to the community rather than injecting community interest into these."[98]

Low voter turnout, frequent re-election of board incumbents and episodic rather than continuous political conflict are viewed by the continuous competition theorists as evidence that our present school district governments are "unredeemably undemocratic".[99] Critics of this theory insist that the continuous competition theorists are wrong - not in their data, but in their premise. The essence of democracy is not universal and continuous participation, but the freedom to participate or not to participate.[100]

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[96] H.J. Tucker and L. Harmon Zeigler, Professionals Versus the Public: Attitudes, Communication and Response in School Districts (New York: Longman, Inc., 1980), 6-8.

[97] Ibid., p. 12

[98] Frank W. Lutz and Laurence Iannaccone, Public Participation in Local School Districts (Lexington MA: D. C. Heath & Co., 1978). 126.

[99] Ibid

> The key element for an individual in deciding whether or not to participate seems to be whether one is dissatisfied enough to participate and change things or satisfied enough so one does not care to participate. That the public does not often feel dissatisfied enough to actively become involved in changing things does not mean it cannot or will not vigorously participate in the future.[101]

Dissatisfaction Theory

The decision output and continuous competition theories, though different in their respective central concepts of substantive representation and participation, seem to lead us to the inevitable conclusion that local school district governments are fundamentally undemocratic. The dissatisfaction theory instead leads to a firm "yes" answer to the question as to whether there is democracy in school district governance. Without denying that participation is desirable and that reasonable congruence between the demands of the people and their outcomes is an objective of a democratic government, dissatisfaction theorists insist that the essence of democracy is freedom to participate and change policy when the people are dissatisfied enough with that policy. This also includes the freedom not to participate when the people are satisfied enough with the policy to leave it alone.[102] This represents the focal point of the dissatisfaction theory of democratic participation in school governance.

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[100] Frank W. Lutz, "Local School Board Decision-Making", _Education and Urban Society_ 12 (Aug., 1980): 454.

[101] Ibid

The dissatisfaction theory began with a single case study of the Robertsdale school board election by Frank Lutz.[103] In this study the defeat of a single incumbent board member by a newcomer to the suburban community led to a series of events including: a shift of board leadership, major revision of educational policies and, involuntary superintendent turnover. Lutz's study produced a conceptual model and basis for the dissatisfaction theory. The Lutz-Iannaccone model proposes the following:

1. The socio-political system of a school district is an open system and part of a larger socio-political macro system.
2. Within the school district system there are many socio-political sub-systems including the school board, teacher association, local building faculties and small informal groups.
3. Because of the sacred value of the politics of education, it is more likely that the school board will become closed to inputs from its environment than it is for the total school system.
4. Under these conditions, it is possible for a socio-political gap to develop between the school board and the electorate of the political system. This situation can develop through the following steps:
    a) The community changes through population increase or mobility;

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[102] Frank W. Lutz and Lee-Yen Wang., op. cit., p. 6.

[103] Frank W. Lutz, "Social Systems and School Districts," (Ph.D. diss., Washington Univ., 1962).

thus there is a shift in the community's socio-economic class.

b) Meanwhile the school board remains relatively unchanged in composition and values. It becomes progressively segregated from the school district but not from the superintendent.

5. When this gap grows too wide (when the values held about education by the electorate are very different from those of the board) and the electorate cannot influence the decisions (outputs) of the board sufficiently through normal channels (inputs), incumbent school board defeat will occur, often followed by involuntary superintendent turnover.[104]

A number of studies were undertaken at the Claremont Graduate School to test the effect of the defeat of an incumbent school board member and to clarify its meaning. Walden[105] studied the effect of incumbent defeat on superintendent turnover. His data supported the prediction that the incidence of superintendent turnover would be greater after defeat of an incumbent than after no defeat. This turnover took place within three years of the incumbent defeat and tended to be involuntary.[106] The data further suggested that incumbent defeat is not only related to the political stability of the school district, but is also a reflection of a struggle for power between an incumbent power group and an emergent one.[107]

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[104] Frank W. Lutz, "Role of Explanatory Models in Theory Building," Educational Administration Quarterly 11 (Winter, 1975): 73-74.

[105] John C. Walden, "School Board Changes and Involuntary Superintendent Turnover," (Ph. D. diss., The Claremont Graduate School, 1966).

[106] Ibid., p. 79.

A colleague of Walden investigated the relationship between school board incumbent defeat and the succession of outsider superintendents. Freeborn reasoned that if incumbent defeat signified change in the school district, the successor superintendent would be committed to change. Freeborn's analysis of data covering 692 elections in a ten year period supported his hypothesis that school boards not experiencing incumbent defeat or a pattern of instability would either continue with the present superintendent or, if a successor was at hand, select an insider. Conversely, if school boards were confronted with incumbent defeat, they would, within three years of the event, select an outside successor.[108]

Richard Kirkendall was concerned with exploring the possible indicators-social, economic, and political variables, preceding incumbent school board member defeat. Kirkendall's study provided strong support for the belief that changes in the "societal dimension lead to political activities which result in the abrupt shift in the government dimension following the defeat of an incumbent board member".[109] The two variables Kirkendall found that contributed most powerfully to the occurrence were:

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[107] Laurence Iannaccone, Politics in Education (NY: Center for Applied Research Inc., 1967), 90.

[108] Robert M. Freeborn, "School Board Change and Succession Pattern of Superintendents" (Ph. D. Diss., The Claremont School, 1966), p. 155.

(1) Percentage change in assessed valuation over a three year period, seven to ten years before the election.
(2) The ratio of votes against incumbents to total votes cast in the election immediately preceding incumbent defeat.[110]

Kirkendall asserted that as long as school boards remain acceptable to the prevailing power group and the prevailing power structure remains compatible with the value-orientation of the school district community, the composition of the board will remain unchanged.[111] Iannaccone took this one step further, characterizing the governmental dimension of a school board-community relationship as stable with short periods of abrupt change, while he described the societal dimension as having a more constant rate of change than its counterpart. Social and economic forces provide the foundation for change which is often reflected in the composition of the board.[112]

Given the difference in these two dimensions, a divergence between the two is likely to occur. The gap will widen and ultimately involve the democratic control process. Citizen dissatisfaction with the governmental dimension will prompt utilization of the electoral process to restore the equilibrium between the two dimensions. If those in power do not conform the citizenry expresses its dissatisfaction by voting to bring the power structure into line with the community's new value orientation. This will result in defeat of incumbent board members and serve as a change mandate to the school board that its thinking has to be brought closer to that of the community.[113]

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[109] Ibid. p. 97

[110] Kirkendall, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Iannaccone, Politics in Education, op. cit., p. 14.

The LeDoux study, conducted in New Mexico, was a replication of the Kirkendall study. Using discriminate analysis, the results of the statistical application to the same socio-economic and political variables used by Kirkendall indicated the predictability rate for incumbent defeat in Mew Mexico was lower than the one in California. LeDoux pointed to three factors which may have accounted for the results in New Mexico. First, outmigration - a downward trend in school enrollment and/or assessed valuation - accounted heavily for the differences in the predictability rate. Second, LeDoux reasoned that assessed valuation was a contributing factor to the lower predictability rate in school districts where there was more reliance on the state for revenue support as opposed to property tax dependence. Third, the number of incumbents who chose not to seek reelection in the 1971 New Mexico school board election affected the replication.[114]

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[113] Brock P. Hunt, "An Inductive Approach to the Dissatisfaction Theory in the Governance of School Districts: Predicting Incumbent School Board Member Defeat," (Ph.D.Diss., Penn State University, 1980), 13.

Garberina recognized that neither the Kirkendall nor the LeDoux study considered school board response to the indicators of community conditions. He selected the tax rate as the indicator of the school board's response to the public's demand to increase or decrease educational services. This variable was assumed to be a measure of the gap between the societal and the governmental dimensions identified in the Iannaccone-Lutz explanatory model.[115] Lutz and Garberina concluded:

> The addition of the response indicator to the operational model is an observable phenomenon affecting the gap between the school board and the community, and the community's behavior at the polls. Thus it improves the prediction of incumbent school board member defeat in declining communities.[116]

Hunt's study took an inductive approach to the dissatisfaction theory in the governance of local school districts in Ohio. He found that the set of variables used in the earlier verification studies was again able to account for a significant amount of variance in the incumbent school board election. These findings support the dissatisfaction theorists' belief that the school district is a successful democratic government. He found, however, that these variables were not universally able to predict incumbent defeat due primarily to the instability of the variable emphasis from one election to another. Hunt reemphasized that the prediction of a school board election is substituted for the concept of universality and suggested this approach for further research.[117]

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[114] Eugene P. LeDoux, "Outmigration: Its Reation to Social, Political and Economic Conditions and to the Governing of Local School Districts in New Mexico," (Ph. D. Diss., Univ. of New Mexico, 1971).

[115] William Garberina Sr., "Public Demand, School Board Response and Incumbent Defeat: An Examination of the Governance of Local School Districts in Massachusetts," (Ph. D. Diss., Penn State Univ., 1975), p. 125.

[116] Frank W. Lutz and William L. Garberina, "Demand-Response and School Board Member Incumbent Defeat," The Journal of Educational Administration March 1977: 281.

This pattern, of socio-economic and political change, followed by defeat of incumbent board members and involuntary superintendent turnover, confirms the capacity of local school districts to change themselves or their schools. First found at the local level through case studies and then tested with verification studies, the pattern confirms the ability of the local school districts to act in a democratic manner. "The dissatisfaction theory of public participation in local school politics describes a process that not only is significant at appropriate statistical levels but really occurs and does make a difference in the educational organizations."[118]

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[117] Brock P. Hunt, op. cit., p. 201.

Summary

The research reviewed revealed a definite awareness of the need for public input and public relations measures when entering into a school construction project. The research pointed to a need for more community involvement, particularly in the early planning stages. However, there was little follow-up on board composition following an unpopular construction project. What happens to board members who fail to respond to public demends and go through with an unpopular project?

The research on public participation leads to the conclusion that people need not only to be informed but to be involved. If citizens are to learn to govern themselves, they must participate at the local level. Thus public education cannot and does not exist in a vacuum.

The research dealing with the politics of school-community interaction indicated that the manner in which school officials deal with this outcry of the public for more participation may well have an effect on their own political future. During the last fifteen years in the politics of education, three schools of thought have emerged in response to the question: Is the governance of public education democratic? The main difference among them is their interpretation of the key element in the democratic process: representation, participation or dissatisfaction. These conceptualizations are called (1) a decision output theory, (2) a continuous competition theory and (3) a dissatisfaction theory. Whereas the first two express doubt that democracy is a viable political concept in local school districts, the dissatisfaction theory leaves little question that a local school district is a successful democratic government.[119]

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[118] Frank W. Lutz and Laurence Iannaccone, Public Participation in Local School Districts (Lexington, MA; D. C. Heath & Co., 1978), p. 121.

The dissatisfaction theory began with a single case study of the Robertsdale school board election by Frank Lutz. Lutz and Iannaccone developed a model of the chain of events which occured after the defeat of a single incumbent board member including involuntary superintendent turnover and outside succession. A number of verification studies were done to test this model and to clarify its meaning. The present study has looked once again at a single case, the school board election of the Sherwood School District, in which three incumbent board members were defeated. This study investigated a gap in previous research: Could a single political issue cause the public to become so dissatisfied and therefore lead to the defeat of three incumbent school board members? The present study hopes to add to the knowledge in this field.

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[119] Lutz and Iannaccone, Public Participation, op. cit., pp. 124-132.

CHAPTER 3

Procedures

The focusing of attention on one community's activities for a period of time when critical decisions are being made concerning a school construction project should create a better understanding of the political forces contributing to these decisions. For this reason, the case study approach was the method of inquiry selected for this study.

Research Design

All research designs can be discussed in terms of their relative strengths and limitations. The merits of a particular design are related to the rationale for selecting it as the most appropriate means of addressing the research problem. This case study was conducted through an ex post facto research design with a descriptive treatment of the collected data. Herold C. Hunt, an educational administration researcher, noted the appropriateness of the case study approach in educational administration:

> In recent years the case method, originally developed in other disciplines, has increasingly proved its value to educational administration. Though variously used in different fields, the method has several common denominators, and the differences in its application are largely matters of emphasis. Inherent are the appropriate use of theory and the acquisition of factual material and procedural skills, but the core of the method is the use of the description of an actual situation out of which a problem ("case") has developed. The purpose is to encourage and develop the

> necessary competencies for dealing with real-life problems, and also the wisdom to see whether and how the problems might have been avoided.[120]

Recently, education has turned to case study research to explore the processes and dynamics of practice. "A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process or a social unit."[121] It is a particularly suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects of education.[122]

Olson has developed a list of case study characteristics that may illuminate the nature of this research design. They are grouped under three of the four characteristics summarized by Merriam as essential properties of a qualitative case study: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic and inductive.[123]

> Particularistic means the case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon.
> --It can suggest to the reader what to do or what not to do in a similar situation.
> --It can examine a specific instance but illuminate a general problem.

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[120] C. G. Sargent and E. L. Belisle, Educational Administration: Cases and Concepts (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1955), 5.

[121] Sharan B. Merriam, Case Study Research in Education (London: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), xiv.

[122] Ibid., p. xiii.

[123] Ibid. p. 11.

> Descriptive means the end product of a case study is a rich "thick" description of the phenomenon under study.
>
> --It can illustrate the complexity of a situation - the fact that not one but many factors contributed to it.
>
> --It has the advantage of hindsight yet can be relevant in the present.
>
> Heuristic means that case studies illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study.
>
> --It can discuss and evaluate alternatives not chosen.
>
> --It can evaluate, summarize and conclude, thus increasing its potential applicability.[124]

Stake claims that knowledge learned from case study is different from other research knowledge. He concludes that case study knowledge is more concrete, more contextual and more developed by reader interpretation. "Readers bring to a case study their own experience and understanding, which leads to generalizations when new data for the case are added to old data."[125]

It is for all of the above reasons that the case study research design was selected for this study. In a qualitative approach to research the objective is to understand the meaning of an experience. The qualitative researcher is more concerned with process than outcomes or products. "How" and "why" questions are best answered by case study research designs.[126]

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[124] D. C. Hoaglin et.al., Data for Decisions (Cambridge, MA: Abt, 1982).

[125] R. E. Stake, "Case Study Methodology: An Epistemological Advocacy," W. W. Welsh ed., Case Study Methodology in Education Evaluation, (Minneapolis: Minnesota Research and Evaluation Center, 1981) 36.

The purpose of this study was to confirm and extend the current knowledge base in the area of school-community interaction as it relates to school boards and superintendents. The dissatisfaction theory of democratic participation in school governance provided the theoretical backdrop for this study. The researcher hopes to show that the Lutz-Iannaccone model of the dissatisfaction theory explored in chapter two held true in the Sherwood School Board election of November, 1987. Specifically, the Sherwood community had changed, the school board remained relatively unchanged in composition and values, and the electorate attempted to influence the decisions of the board through the defeat of incumbent board members. In addition, the researcher hopes to show that a single issue, the decision to renovate the senior high school building rather than build a new high school, led the public to become "dissatisfied" to this extent.

That theory had its origin in a single case study of the Robertsdale school board election. By looking critically at another school board election, and the impact a single policy issue had on that election, it is hoped that this study has built upon existing knowledge and has produced early adjustments to educational decision-making in order to put it more in line with the needs and aspirations of the community.

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[126] Merriam, op. cit., pp. 9-19.

Data Collection

Much research is guided by prior theory. "The theory provides a framework for what is to be observed and what is to be collected in the form of data".[127] The dissatisfaction theory of democratic participation in school governance has provided such a framework for this study.

In a qualitative case study the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing all data.

> As such, the researcher can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information. Conversely the investigator as a human instrument is limited by being human - that is, mistakes are made, opportunities are missed, personal biases interfere.[128]

The researcher in this study has had experience in interviewing and gathering data through her participation in doing evaluations for Research for Better Schools. This experience has hopefully given the researcher the confidence needed to conduct interviews and to solicit different types of information from respondents. The researcher is also currently an administrator in the district which is under study. As Goetz and Le Compte observe, case study research "is one of the few modes of scientific study that admit the subjective perception and biases of both participants and researcher into the research frame."[129] Guba and Lincoln suggest, "The best cure for biases is to be aware of how they slant and shape what we hear, how they interface with our reproduction of the speaker's reality and how they transfigure truth into falsity."[130] All research has its biases. The researcher feels confident that her awareness of investigator bias has helped her to deal with this limitation inherent in this type of research.

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[127] Ibid. p. 58.

[128] Ibid, p. 37.

Data Collection occurred in two phases. The first phase was the compilation of the historical record by collecting and systemically analyzing selected available documents in order to accurately present the events of the case. These sources included: school board minutes, a school board authorized feasibility study, architectural notes and memos, school board building and maintenance committee meeting minutes, newspaper coverage and reactions to major events, state reports and minutes of state required meetings.

Documents are a ready-made, easily accessible source of data. One limitation is that most documents are not produced for research purposes. However, documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they "can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated"[131] This "grounding in real-world issues and day-to-day concerns is ultimately what the naturalistic inquiry is working toward."[132]

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[129] J. P. Goetz and M. D. Le Compte, Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research (Orlando, Fla: Academic Press, 1984), 95.

[130] E. G. Guba and Y. S. Lincoln, Effective Evaluation, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981), 148.

In reviewing the documents of the case the researcher carried out a textual analysis of the documents obtained. This involved looking at the language of the documents, searching for key phrases, metaphores and repetitive patterns.

In determining what socio-economic conditions were present within the community at the time of the perceived need for a renovations project the researcher used information obtained from questions based on Kirkendall's eleven social and economic indicators that could predict the road to incumbent defeat.(Appendix A)[133]

Kirkendall pointed out that simple increases or decreases in average daily attendance represent changes in the need for school housing, teachers, supplies and so forth. These changes represent potential pressures on the school board. School districts which change in density of population will feel different pressures that those districts not experiencing such changes.[134]

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[131] Merriam, op. cit., p. 109

[132] Guba and Lincoln, op. cit., p. 234.

[133] Richard S. Kirkendall, "Discriminating Social, Economic and Political Characteristics of Changing Versus Stable Policy-Making Systems in School Districts", (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1966), pp. 104-105

Percentage change in assessed valuation over a period of time is a measure of changes in the wealth of a school district community. It reflects new building, changes in land use and changes in assessment practices. These factors will have an impact on the socio-economic conditions of a community. Kirkendall found this indicator to come the "closest of all the socio-economic indicators to being an indication of changes in the cost of housing and therefore to changes in social class status."[135]

Assessed valuation per average daily attendance is an indicator of a community's financial ability to support its schools:

> A high assessed valuation per average daily attendance could result from a significant industrial or commercial use of area within the district or from very expensive homes coupled with a low number of school aged children per capita. In either case a specific kind of community would be defined.
>
> On the other hand a low assessed valuation per average daily attendance would result from a predominantly residential community with little or no industry.[136]

Percentage change in the assessed valuation per average daily attendance is measure of the magnitude of the change in a community's ability to financially support its schools. "Changes in the measures of this indicator are apt to be felt very quickly by boards of education and superintendents as they construct their annual budgets."[137]

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[134] Ibid. pp. 21-22.

[135] Ibid. p. 105.

[136] Ibid. p. 23.

Interviewing is a common means of collecting qualitative data. Patton explains the purpose of interviewing in qualitative case study research:

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe....We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behavior that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people organize the world and the meaning they attach to what goes on in the world - we have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.[138]

The second phase of data collection was the conducting of in-depth interviews of key participants in the study. A preliminary letter of introduction was sent to key participants. This letter noted that permission had been granted by the superintendent to pursue this study and that the researcher would be contacting them shortly in the hope that they would grant an interview. A sample letter is indicated in Appendix B. These participants included: the district superintendent at the time of the decision to renovate the high school building, the assistant superintendent at the time, school board members who served at the time of the decision to renovate and school board members after the election of November, 1987. The researcher was also open to the possibility of interviewing others who may be uncovered as "leads" along the way. This is an example of what Chien calls "purposive sampling." It is "based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most."[139] Other key participants discovered in this manner included the architect, the school district solicitor, teachers and community members who were also interviewed.

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[137] Ibid. p. 24.

[138] M. Q. Patton, Qualitative Evaluation Methods (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Inc., 1980) 196.

A semi-structured interview protocol was used to discover as much as possible from the respondents. The research questions were the basis for the semi-structured interview guide. Certain information was desired from all respondents, however, neither the wording nor the order of the questions were necessarily exactly the same for each respondent. This format allowed the researcher "to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging world view of the respondent and to new ideas on the topic."[140] Leeway was allowed for the interviewer to follow up on an informational lead by a respondent to a planned question or to establish what conditions or events influenced his/her position with respect to the construction project.

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[139] I. Chien "Appendix: An Introduction to Sampling" Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook's Research Methods in Social Relations, L. H. Kidder ed., (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981), 440.

[140] Merriam, op. cit., p. 74.

The Instrument

A preliminary semi-structured interview guide is found in Appendix C. The open-ended questions were based on the research questions and also on information gained through an examination of the literature. Two pilot interviews were conducted with district personnel who were not considered by the researcher to be "key participants" in the study but who had a working knowledge of the project from its inception. The researcher used the tapes of the pilot interviews as a critical analysis of the questions on the interview protocol as well as a way to improve her questioning technique. Each of the pilot interviewees was also asked for feedback concerning the questions and the questioning technique. This feedback was quite positive and helped the researcher as she proceeded with the interview process.

Tape recording the interviews is the most common method to ensure that everything said is preserved for analysis. The researcher took written notes in addition to taping each interview.

At the outset of each interview each respondent was asked permission to tape record the interview. Additionally, the purpose of the study was explained to each participant and anonymity was assured through the use of pseudonyms.

Again, it should be emphasized that in a qualitative case study, the researcher is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing all data. The success of an interview depends on the interaction between interviewer and respondent. "The researcher who attends to the limitations while maximizing the strengths inherent in all phases of the interview process will be richly rewarded by the data obtained."[141]

Arnstein has suggested a typology of citizen participation, arranged in a ladder pattern with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens' participation/power in determining a plan or program. (see figure 2) Interviewees were asked to consider Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation and to determine the level at which the citizens of the district participated in the decision to renovate.

Arnstein explains the eight levels of participation:

1. Manipulation -- In the name of citizen participation, people are placed on rubber- for the express purpose of "educating" them or engineering their support.
2. Therapy -- Masquerade of involving citizens in planning, engaging them in extensive activities, but diverting them from dealing with important matters.
3. Informing -- Informing citizens of their rights, responsibilities and options with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation.

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[141] Ibid., p. 86.

4. Consultation -- Inviting citizen's opinions with no assurance that citizen concerns and ideas will be taken into account.

Figure 2: Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation[142]

```
  :                                :
  :      Citizen Control           :    --+
8 +--------------------------------+      :
  :                                :      :  Degrees
  :      Delegated Power           :      +- of
7 +--------------------------------+      :  citizen power
  :                                :      :
  :        Partnership             :      :
6 +--------------------------------+    --+
  :                                :    --+
  :          Placation             :      :
5 +--------------------------------+      :
  :                                :      :  Degrees
  :        Consultation            :      +- of
4 +--------------------------------+      :  tokenism
  :                                :      :
  :          Informing             :      :
3 +--------------------------------+    --+
  :                                :    --+
  :           Therapy              :      :
2 +--------------------------------+      :
  :                                :      +- Nonparticipation
  :         Manipulation           :      :
1 +--------------------------------+      :
  :                                :    --+
  :                                :
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5. Placation -- Citizens begin to have some degree of influence. Allowing citizens to advise or plan but retain for powerholders the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice.

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[142] Ibid., p. 217.

6. Partnership -- Power is redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. Agreeing to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses.
7. Delegated Power -- Citizens achieving dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or program. Citizens hold significant cards to assure accountability of the program to them.
8. Citizen Control -- Citizens demand that degree of control which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects and be able to negotiate the conditions under which "outsiders" may change them.[143]

Arnstein admits that in the "real world" of people and programs, there might be one hundred and fifty rungs with less sharp and "pure" distinctions among them. However her eight rung ladder does give sufficient "food for thought" to those school officials who feel that they do involve the public in the decision-making process. The purpose of this question was to have the interviewees select a number, a position on the ladder which best describes, in his/her own estimation, the degree of citizen participation which took place during this project.

Treatment of Data

In qualitative research, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously. Merriam explains:

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[143] Arnstein, Ibid., pp. 218-223.

> Analysis begins with the first interview, the first observation, the first document read. Emerging insights, hunches and tentative hypotheses direct the next phase of data collection, which in turn leads to refinement or reformulation of one's questions, and so on. It is an interactive process throughout which the investigator is concerned with producing believable and trustworthy findings.[144]

The researcher was flexible in data collection and analysis as described above. In analyzing recorded interviews, ideally verbatim transcription provides the best data base. Merriam has developed a less costly alternative to transcription called the "interview log". The researcher begins by identifying necessary details of the interview: name, date, etc. The researcher then plays the tape and takes notes on important statements or ideas expressed by the informant. Words or phases or entire sentences are quoted exactly.[145]

The interview log was used to summarize all interviews within twenty-four hours after they were conducted. This format allowed the researcher to add her own observations about what was said and to look for emerging themes or categories from the data. Again, the research questions guided this "treasure hunt", however, the number of people who mentioned a certain theme and the frequency with which something arose in the data indicated an important dimension. "The major way to detect and correct distortion is by comparing an informant's account with accounts given by other informants."[146]

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[144] Ibid., p. 120.

[145] Ibid. p. 84.

The final product of a case study is shaped by the data that are collected and the analysis that accompanies the entire process. Data analysis was guided by the research questions, hence, by the theoretical framework to which the study intends to add. The results of the study were reported in a descriptive, narrative case study format. Carter V. Good asserts, "The narrative or running record may be entered either chronologically or topically, or by some appropriate combination of the two plans of organization."[147] Merriam agrees, "How one integrates data to support the analysis is not as important as achieving some balance between the two."[148] The data collected will be reported using three methods: (1) A chronological compilation of the historic record in narrative form, in order to accurately present the case, (2) A narrative summary of each interview conducted, and (3) An ex post facto topical analysis of the events guided by the research questions summarizing the data analysis phase.

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[146] W. F. Whyte, "Interviewing in Field Research," Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual R. G. Burgess (ed.), (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), 116.

[147] Carter V. Good and Douglas E. Scates, Methods of Research (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts Inc., 1954), 759.

[148] Merriam, op. cit., p. 203.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

In this chapter, the findings of this study are presented using three methods: (1) A chronological compilation of the historic record in narrative form, (2) A narrative summary of each interview conducted, and (3) An ex post facto topical analysis of the events quided by the research questions summarizing the data analysis phase. The chapter is divided into three sections.

Key participants are identified as follows:

Defeated Incumbents: Mrs. SB1, Mr. SB2, Mr. SB3

Retired at end of term: Mr. SB4

Successful Incumbent: Mrs. SB5

Not up for Re-Election: Mr. SB6, Mr. SB7, Mr. SB8, Mr. SB9

Successful Non-Incumbents: Mr. SB10, Mrs. SB11, Mr. SB12, Dr. SB13

Administration: Dr. S1, Dr. S2, Mrs. PR

Community Members: Mr. CM1, Mr. CM2, Mrs. CM3, Mr. CM4, Ms. CM5

Architects: Mr. A1, Mr. A2, Mr. W

Solicitor: Mr. S

Historical Record of Events

The following is a chronology of events which took place from the time of the decision to conduct a feasibility study to the school board election of November 1987. It is a summary of data obtained from official school board minutes, building and maintenance committee meeting minutes, Act 34 hearing transcripts and newspaper accounts of events.

March 25, 1985 - The district superintendent spoke at a public board meeting on the anticipated renovations to the Senior High School building. The replacement of windows in the 1931 building was hoped to be completed by the summer of 1986. The Building and Maintenance committee was to meet with a local architect, D & W, in mid-April to discuss the proposed renovation project at the senior high school.

April, 1985 - A brainstorming session including school board members and district administrators brought forth many ideas dealing with the renovation of the senior high school building. Among ideas presented that day was the concept of adding the district's first enclosed swimming pool.

June 10, 1985 - The school board approved a proposal by the architectural firm D & W regarding a feasibility study of possible renovations and additions to the high school. The feasibility study was done at a cost of $10,400.

November 25, 1985 - A public school board meeting was held in the 1931 building of the senior high school rather than at the junior high school, its usual location. According to the board president, the meeting was intentionally held there in order to underscore the need for a renovation project. Representatives of the architectural firm of D & W presented a feasibility study to enlarge and modernize the senior high school. Sketches were shown to the Board and audience showing extensive renovations and additions, including a swimming pool. The cost of the renovation/addition project, according to the study, would be between ten and twelve million dollars. The feasibility study included an option of moving the junior high to the senior high location and the senior high to the junior high location. This option was estimated to cost in excess of fourteen million dollars. The study also included the cost for a new centrally located high school, estimated at 22 million dollars. This estimate did not include the purchase of land or an assessment of the existing high school location. The costs of the three proposals indicated that renovating and enlarging the present high school would be the most economical. The Board indicated that there would be hearings and public meetings before any final decision would be made. During the presentation, many high school teachers and several students and parents made comments and asked questions.

According to the newspaper reports, the presentation drew mixed reaction from those attending. Approximately 100 residents, teachers, and students attended the meeting. Several teachers commented on the lack of input they had. One resident asked if it would not be better to just build a new high school in a more geographically central location in the district. The superintendent responded by saying that there may be a future need for a second high school to be built, similar to a neighboring school district. There were several positive comments regarding the swimming pool. The building and maintenance chairperson said that the plans were very preliminary and that they could be modified. No vote was taken, according to the minutes.

December 18, 1985 - The chairperson of the building and maintenance committee, Mr. SB6, informed the board at a public meeting that architectural firms were contacting the district showing interest in the senior high renovations/addition project. The committee would be interviewing these architects in the near future.

January 30, 1986 - The preliminary report from the teachers' committee for building additions and renovations was presented to the district. The committee had been appointed by the high school principal and was charged with the responsibility of identifying, organizing and reporting the reactions, viewpoints and concerns of the faculty and support staff to the proposal for additions and renovations to the high school building. Realizing that the school board had previously approved the project after considering other alternatives such as new site construction and exchanging location with the junior high school, the committee concentrated its efforts on the proposal for renovations and additiions to the high school building. The committee made several suggestions of a general nature and also suggested future meetings with department chairpeople and the architect, once selected, and any other district planning committees.

January 27, 1986 - School Board minutes reported that eight architects had been interviewed relative to the Senior High Renovations Project.

February 10, 1986 - The School Board named the former high school principal to fill a new position of director of planning and special projects for the school district. Work load was to include senior high school renovations, change in secondary grade alignment and other major projects of the district.

March 10, 1986 - A Board committee recommended the hiring of the firm of SCA to provide architectural services for the Senior High Renovations Project. The recommendation was unanimously approved. The chairperson of the building and maintenance committee called for a "community centered facility," that could be used twelve months a year. He stated that the cost would remain in the ten to twelve million dollar range and the committee was hoping to open bids for the project in February of 1987.

June, 1986 - The researcher was hired to fill a vacancy as assistant principal in the senior high school. When she was interviewed in April, she was told by the superintendent that the high school would be undergoing an extensive renovations/addition project and that the district anticipated moving the ninth graders from the junior high schools to the senior high school building in September of 1989.

June 23, 1986 - The chairperson of the building and maintenance committee, Mr. SB6, reminded the board at a public meeting that a meeting would be held on June 27, 1986 in the senior high library with the architect. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss concepts involved in the senior high renovations project.

July 14, 1986 - The chairperson of the building and maintenance committee reminded the board at a public meeting that a meeting would be held on July 22, 1986 at the high school with the architect to discuss the renovations project.

August 18, 1986 - The director of planning and special projects reported that the senior high school renovations project was to get underway in the Spring of 1987. The target date for the eleven million dollar project was June, 1988. Bid opening was to be in early March, 1987. He reiterated that the cost of a new high school would be in excess of 22 million dollars. The director stated that the district would hold public meetings in the fall of 1986 to gather input from the community. He emphasized in the newspaper report that the school board welcomed comments and suggestions on the project and that such comments should be forwarded to the district office.

August 25, 1986 - At a public board meeting the chairperson of the building and maintenance committee, Mr. SB6, reported on the many meetings that had been held regarding the senior high renovations project.

November 24, 1986 - The chairperson of the building and maintenance committee, Mr. SB6, informed the board that the architect and his associate would be present at the December 1 planning session to make a presentation concerning the senior high school renovations/addition project.

December 1, 1986 - At the school board's annual reorganization meeting, Mrs. SB1 was re-elected board president and Mr. SB2 was elected board vice president. The reorganization meeting was followed by another planning session which included a full presentation of the proposed renovation/addition project by the architect. The proposals estimated the cost at 11.9 million dollars. The architect said he expected construction to begin in April 1987, and to be completed by September 1988.

December 17, 1986 - The district superintendent made a presentation on the renovation/addition project at a public board meeting. He reviewed the feasibility study, justifying the renovation of the current school site. He outlined the cost of the project as well as areas where the building was to be enhanced. The chairperson of the building and maintenance committee, Mr. SB6, commented on the many hours of work spent by the committee on this project.

December 19, 1986 - The architect and his associate made a public presentation of the final plans to an audience consisting mainly of board members and teachers. The district handed out an information sheet with pertinent information and a breakdown of estimated costs totaling 14.4 million dollars. The director of planning stated that two more public meetings would be held in early 1987.

January 12, 1987 - At a public school board meeting one board member, Mr. SB8, began to raise questions concerning the wisdom of renovating a school on a "sub-par tract." Mr. SB8 stated that the feasibility study was not thorough enough and that he felt a new building was the way to go. Another board member, Mr. SB4, stated his concern that the public had not been adequately informed about the project. The remaining directors called for a discussion of the concerns but still indicated their support. Most of the board felt that too much time had been spent already in planning to be wasted. The district superintendent stated that the cost of renovations were currently $14.4 million and that cost of a new school was currently estimated at twenty-six million dollars. There was also a discussion on demographics and the possibility of increased population. Mr. SB8 told reporters that he was leaning toward construction of a new high school assuming that the sale of the existing high school would provide enough money to purchase land more centrally located. Mr. SB3 stated that he was not 100 percent sure the board had made the right decision. MR. SB7 insisted that the board could not waste 1 1/2 years of planning, stating that the board now had a responsibility to emphasize to the public that they had made the right decision.

January 26, 1987 - At a public board meeting, Mr. SB8 asked the board to hire a firm to do an appraisal of the high school site. He felt that such an appraisal should have been included in the feasibility study. Mr. SB8 was told that the building and maintenance committee would take his suggestion under advisement. The Board took action to hire a firm to prepare specifications for the removal of asbestos in the senior high school building. This action was approved by an eight to one vote, Mr. SB8 dissenting. A resident raised questions about the project and asked how the public would be kept informed of the progress of the project. The superintendent responded that a public meeting would be held on February 11.

February 11, 1987 - An informational meeting was held at the high school, as an outgrowth of a citizens group concerned about the renovations project. The group was called Parents for Quality Education. Mrs. SB12, a concerned citizen at the time, was the group's spokesperson. Approximately 122 people attended the meeting held in the high school auditorium. According to newspaper accounts, the plans drew criticism and questions from residents and teachers with concerns ranging from the safety of asbestos removal to location of the pool. The district superintendent defended the board's decision to build a two million dollar enclosed pool. A resident who conducts the district's census said people in her area wanted a new centrally located high school. The superintendent acknowledged that in probably fifteen to twenty years the district would need a new high school but he added that this was the best solution now. Another resident expressed concern over safety of the proposed underpass to take students under a major road.

Another resident asked if the meeting was just a formality. Was the project going, on no matter what the taxpayers felt? Mr. SB3 responded that the decision to renovate was made in November 1987, at a public meeting, when the board voted on the feasibility plan. A former board member, the former chairperson of the building and maintenance committee, asked the public where everyone was 1 1/2 years ago when the decision was being made. The superintendent stated that the board was committed to the renovations project. He added that the architects had been working for eight to ten months, and to try to build a new school now would be unrealistic. Mr. SB8 took credit for bringing the public out to the meeting. He stated that his phone had been ringing and that a crisis situation was developing for the future.

February 23, 1987 - At a public school board meeting, the board was presented with a petition signed by 1,231 taxpayers calling for the board to: (1) reconsider its decision to proceed with the renovation and addition to the current high school, (2) plan and proceed immediately with the construction of a much needed elementary schoool, (3) begin planning for a new centrally located educational complex that would include a new high school and, (4) immediately form a broad-based community study group composed of parents, students, teachers, administrators, business leaders, senior citizens, and board members to advise the board on district reorganization and construction of new facilities. The taxpayers also asked the board to consider a referendum on the project. A spokesperson said the renovation/addition project would only add 15 classrooms and accommodate 1600 students - "that hardly sounds like a sixteen million dollar project." A former board member spoke against the project. The president of the teachers' union accused the board of ignoring input from the teachers. Board members defended their position as the best plan. Mr. SB6 stated that he stood behind the board's original decision in addressing the needs of the future. Mr. SB8 spoke in opposition to the project. Since no specifications or bids had been received nor any decisions made on the approach to the bond issue, Mr. SB8 contended that the board had not yet finalized the project. Mr. SB6, chairperson of the building and maintenance committee, reviewed reasons why the building project was selected over a new facility. He also reported on a meeting held the previous week between the architect and the sub-committee at which time they reviewed the specifications for the project.

March 9, 1987 - At a public school board meeting, the board unanimously voted to approve the recommendation of the finance committee to finance the high school project through the regional authority. The district superintendent distributed a four-page statement concerning the high school project and the reasons why the district opted to go with the renovation/addition project rather than construct one new school. The bond issue was to be for 18 million dollars, covering the costs of the 15 million dollar high school renovations project plus 3 million dollars in other district work. The local newspaper carried the statement in its entirety. At this meeting, the board also announced that a public hearing regarding the project in accordance with Act 34 would be held on March 18, 1987. District residents were told they may request up to ten minutes to submit testimony by contacting the district office at least three days prior to the hearing.

March 16, 1987 - The district sent out a special edition newsletter devoted to the high school project. It included the superintendent's statement in its entirety, diagrams of the site plan and a break down of the capital improvement projects in addition to the high school project that would be financed with the new eighteen million dollar bond issue.

March 18, 1987 - Act 34 public hearing was held on the high school project. Approximately 150 people attended. The district business manager explained the financing options and projected an eleven mil cost to taxpayers for the project. The superintendent explained the cost increase in the project and addressed three matters of concern of residents: the proposed underpass, the asbestos removal and the pool. The total cost of the project was quoted at $14,971,000. In addition to that amount, 1.4 million dollars was needed for asbestos removal. The architect also gave a description of the project. The school board did not enter into a dialogue with the sixteen persons who presented statements, but all testimony was transcribed for review by the board members and the Department of Education.

Of the eighteen statements, including two written statements, four were in favor of the project, fourteen opposed. Mr. SB10, then a concerned citizen, called for a stop to the project and careful community planning for a new school. Mr. SB8 addressed the board as a private citizen stating that it was hard to challenge his peers, but he felt the feasibility study which recommended the renovation project was incomplete. A former superintendent and the wife of another former superintendent also spoke against the project. Mrs. SB11, then a concerned citizen, called on the board to restudy the options.

March 23, 1987 - By a four to three vote, the School Board rejected a motion by Mr. SB8 that the issue of renovating the current high school versus building a new high school be a referendum question on the May primary ballot. Mr. SB8, Mr. SB4, and Mrs. SB5 voted for this motion. Board members who opted against the referendum issue defended their position by saying that they had had two years of informed input behind them and the public did not.

Mr. SB3 stated that the problem with the referendum was that in order to make informed decisions the public would need the benefit of two years of study that the people of the board had put into the project. Mr. SB9 felt that the responsibility to obtain informed input is the board's. He stated that the board had had two years to study the project and that they were elected to decide the issue. These statements were interpreted by one newspaper account to read that Mr. SB3, Mr. SB7, and Mr. SB9 contended that residents could not make "informed or intelligent" decisions based on the two year back-log of information the board had to weed through. This enraged many citizens.

Mr. SB8 pointed out that in order to get the measure to ballot the solicitor would have had to draft the question and get it to the County Board of Elections forty-five days before the May 19 primary. He said the procedure would slow down the project by about two to three weeks. The school board solicitor said if the board had voted to approve the referendum question, the district would have to petition the Board of Elections to accept it for the May ballot. He added that under state regulations, if the project exceeds a cost factor per student, then the residents of the district are required to vote on the project in terms of the costs. This did not occur.

The solicitor said there was also the question of the wording of a referendum question, the delay to the proposed renovation project if it was approved and the fact that it probably would not be binding. He said after the meeting that he doubted if the Board of Elections would accept the question due to the complexity of the issue.

There was also a presentation by a demographic expert from the Pennsylvania Economy League who projected enrollments through the year 1986 which called for a student population in that year in a range of 5530 to 6217 students. After a short executive session, the board approved, six to one, the acquisition of two residential properties and a vacant lot next to the high school, Mr. SB8 dissenting. Also, a company was hired to monitor and test the building throughout asbestos removal. The vote was six to one, Mr. SB8 again dissenting.

A resident who is a lawyer questioned how the board could act on properties and other matters in relation to the high school renovation project when the project plans and costs were not complete. The board solicitor said the board had approved the high school project at previous meetings, but that the board could purchase land at any time.

March 27, 1987 - An unsigned editorial appeared in a local paper chastising the board for not going through with the referendum. The editorial summarized, "...district residents should remember that although the board has locked them out of a vote on the project, they cannot be locked out of voting for or against board members themselves. Perhaps it is time to vote out those board members unwilling to listen to district residents. Then those directors will have plenty of time to brush up on the principles of representative government."

April 13, 1987 - At a public meeting, the Board voted six to three that second Act 34 hearing on the high school project would be held in May due to technical problems with the previous public hearing. The reason given in a prepared statement by the board president was that the public may have been misled because certain costs were combined-namely the costs of the additions together with the costs of the renovations-when they should have not been combined. The public was urged to participate once again and the rules for presenting testimony were the same as the first hearing. The estimated cost of the project was given to be 15.2 million dollars. The estimated cost of a new school was 30 to 35 million dollars. The board also voted six to three to sign and file with the Department of Education PlanCon documents A, B and C: project justification, room schedule, and request for agency site approval. Mr. SB8, Mr. SB4, and Mrs. SB5 were again the three dissenting votes. A second petition was submitted bearing 500 signatures asking the board to reconsider its renovation decision and to begin to look for sites for a future elementary school and centralized senior high. A group of 120 of the district's residents attended the meeting, many speaking in opposition to the renovations project.

Many of the taxpayers were parents who had formed the Parents for Quality Education Group. The board also released its 1987-88 preliminary budget figures, reflecting a possible 26.9 mil increase.

April 27, 1987 - The board voted five to four to hire a firm to remove asbestos from the senior high school building. Mr. SB8 asked the district solicitor if it was legal to award the contract to remove asbestos without awarding the renovations contract. The solicitor indicated that it was. The board officers were authorized, by a six to three vote, to sign and file with the Department of Education PlanCon E - preliminary plans and specifications regarding the high school project. Again, several members of the board and public commented in opposition to the project, the proposed bond issue and the acquisition of properties adjacent to the high school.

May 7, 1987 - The second Act 34 hearing was held regarding the senior high renovations/additions project. The business manager presented financial information: $15,276,380 maximum project total including $8,292,464 for additions and $5,789,105 for alterations. The superintendent again defended the decision to renovate and spoke of a future two-high-school philosophy. Of the thirteen citizens who testified, six had spoken at the previous Act 34 hearing, two spoke in favor of the project, eleven spoke in opposition. Of the six written testimonies received, two had been sent previously, one was in favor, five were opposed. Among those who spoke in opposition were Mr. SB10 and Mrs. SB11, not yet school board candidates, and also Mr. SB8, who spoke as a private citizen. The district superintendent admitted that the commentary by the public would have little impact on the Department of Education and that the Board had the responsibility for making the ultimate decision on the project.

June 8, 1987 - At the public meeting, a motion was passed by a five to three vote to submit PlanCon D financial information to the Department of Education. Another five to three vote approved submission of the Act 34 hearing data to the Department of Education. The project director reported that awarding of the bids should be about one week after the July 14 submission date. He also reported that interviews were taking place for the position of clerk-of-the-works for the high school project. Two members of the Parents for Quality Education group, Mr. SB10 and Ms. SB11, who had since become school board candidates, spoke regarding renovation. Mr. SB10 accused the board of failing to assess the sentiments of the community.

July 13, 1987 - The Board voted to appoint a clerk-of-the-works for the senior high school project. This motion was approved by a five to three vote. Also by a five to three vote, the Board approved submission of PlanCon F, final plans and specifications, to the Department of Education. Again school board candidate, Mr. SB10, spoke against the project. Specifically , he recommended, based on citizen iterest, that the swimming pool not be built until it could be placed in a centralized location. Mr. SB6 accused Mr. SB10 of trying to stop the project any way he could. He stated that it was difficult, meeting after meeting, to listen to Mr. SB10 make a public forum for his comments. The district superintendent announced his retirement when his five-year contract expired on June 30, 1988.

July 17, 1987 - Bid opening for the Senior High Renovations Project. The total for the base bids was $14,492,624. However, including ten alternates the project cost was over the original estimates of $15.1 million. If the board accepted all alternatives at a cost of $17,898,938 they would need to hold a third Act 34 hearing. The architect stated that there was so much work in the area that the costs were much higher now than they were six months ago. Also, he added, renovation work was a little more difficult to bid than new construction.

July 20, 1987 - The District solicitor began a special meeting by indicating that this was a board work session and that public comments would not be received. The board discussed the different options pertaining to which alternates would be included in the project. The board approved Option B by a five to two vote, realizing that this option might necessitate another Act 34 hearing. Option B included alternatives such as a new track, alterations to the field house and a special gutter for the pool. The architect calculated the new construction costs under Option B to be 7.7 percent over the estimated 8.2 million dollars. The superintendent explained that cost overruns on new projects may not exceed eight percent under the State Department of Education regulations. If they do, the school board must conduct another Act 34 hearing. The solicitor recommended having another Act 34 hearing even though it would delay awarding of the bids for another sixty days.

The board voted five to two to indicate its intent to enter into a financial agreement with the regional financing authority for 21.2 million dollars. The total cost of the project was now 17.9 million dollars. Mr. SB8 and Mr. SB4 voted against both measures. Mr. SB8 questioned the legality of some of the actions taken. Mrs. SB11, a school board candidate, questioned not being allowed to comment on the two options considered by the board. Mr. SB10, also a school board candidate, again questioned the amount of money being spent on an old building.

July 22, 1987 - At a public meeting, the district solicitor stated that in analyzing the bids, all of the conditions of Act 34 may not have been met and therefore another hearing was scheduled for August 14, 1987. The purpose of the third hearing was to review the revised financial data for the renovation-addition project. The vote for the hearing was six to two with Mr. SB8 and Mr. SB4 voting no. Action on the bids was deferred until Act 34 appproval. The Board voted, six to two, to submit PlanCon G and H - Cost Data Based on Bids and Construction Financing with Amortization Schedule - to the Department of Education. Several taxpayers spoke in opposition to the project during the public commentary portion of the meeting.

July 29, 1987 - A revised project description for the Senior High Renovations/Addition Project appeared in a half page ad in the local newspaper. The project cost was listed as 17.9 million dollars. The cost of building a new high school was given to be 35 million dollars. The project was expected to get underway September 15.

August 10, 1987 - By a six to three vote, the Board approved the revised cost figures for the Senior High School Project and authorized revision and filing of PlanCon G.

August 14, 1987 - the third Act 34 hearing was held. Approximately 15 people attended. The superintendent once again gave a brief history of the project, the architect gave a brief description of the project and the business manager gave a financial breakdown: Maximum project cost $17,983,930 ;Maximum building construction cost $9,261,040 ;and the estimated cost for alterations $7,566,452. The fact that the meeting was held on a Friday night was called by one resident "an abuse of governmental privilege." Mr. SB8 spoke against the project as a private citizen. He accused the Board of failing to consider the option of a new school as fully as other alternatives reviewed in the feasibility study. Ms. SB11, school board candidate, spoke in opposition to the project but said she realized the Board was already committed to the project in light of the bond issue approval and the fact that asbestos removal was underway. Mr. SB2 also spoke as a private citizen. He asked if the community could afford to mortgage itself and not have any spendable income left. The president of the teachers' association spoke concerning maintaining the optimal learning situation in light of a mid-September start-up. Of the six speakers, five had spoken previously, two spoke in favor of the project and four spoke in opposition.

Immediately following the Act 34 hearing, the board held a special meeting, at which time it approved, by a six to three vote, the submission of revised cost data for the High School Project to the Department of Education.

August 24, 1987 - By a six to three vote, the Board authorized an Intent to Award notice to be sent to low bidders for the Senior High Project. Voting no were Mr. SB4, Mr. SB8 and Mrs. SB5. Mr. SB8 asked the solicitor if the authorization was legal without the Department of Education approval. The solicitor stated that it was. Mr. SB8 asked the solicitor to provide a written opinion.

September 14, 1987 - Project plans were completed at a public meeting when the board gave final approval to the four contracts for the project by a vote of six to three. Voting against final approval of the contracts were Mr. SB4, Mrs. SB5 and Mr. SB8. Mr. SB8 said he would like to seek a hearing on the whole project from the Department of Education. The groundbreaking ceremony was set for September 17.

September 17, 1987 - The groundbreaking ceremony for the senior high school renovations and addition project was postponed due to rain.

September 21, 1987 - The district residents reacted favorably to a proposed new elementary school to be built in the southern end of the district.

September 22, 1987 - The groundbreaking ceremony for the senior high school renovations and addition project was held. Present for the ceremony, and pictured on the front page of the Sherwood Independent were Dr. S1, Dr. S2, Mrs. SB1, Mr. SB2, Mr. SB6, and Mr. SB7. Also present and pictured were the high school principal, the business manager, the director of planning, and numerous contractors associated with the project.

September 28, 1987 - Mr. SB6, chairperson of the building and maintenance committee, reported on the first job conference regarding the Senior High Renovations Project, held on September 22. He also noted that building permits were received September 25 and that construction would start shortly.

Under new business, the board voted unanimously to begin planning for a new elementary school, in order to alleviate overcrowding in the southern part of the district.

October, 1987 - A letter from the school board president, Mrs. SB1, and the superintendent went out to students, parents and staff explaining the high school construction-addition project, thanking all for their cooperation and ensuring them that every effort would be made to minimize the interruption of the educational process.

October 12, 1987 - At a public meeting Mr. SB6, chairperson of the building and maintenance committee, gave an update on the renovations project. The contractor had started to do some soil sampling, to check for any water problems. Work on the pool area was expected to begin at the end of the month.

October 21, 1987 - Meet the Candidates Night was held, sponsored by the Teachers' Association. With the controversy surrounding the decision to renovate and expand the current high school building, the four incumbents - Mrs. SB1, Mr. SB2, Mr. SB3, and Mrs. SB5 - spoke of their years of experience on the board. The challengers - Mr. SB10, Mrs. SB11, and Dr. SB13 - spoke of responsibilities to the public and the need for change. The format included one half hour of questions from a panel of local reporters. The candidates were then given the opportunity to make a short statement and then the meeting was open to the public for a half hour question and answer period.

In their closing remarks, the candidates spoke in general terms of their goals and past accomplishments:

Mrs. SB1 - "I'd like to be judged not just on my answers tonight but on my past eight years."

Mr. SB2 - "We have a good school district. Don't judge candidates on one issue."

Mr. SB3 - "At this time we're embarking on an ambitious era with difficult issues. We need experienced school board members."

Mrs. SB5 - "My number one goal is to increase public confidence in the school district."

Mr. SB10 - "We need to communicate, to be a multi-issue board."

Mrs. SB11 - "There is much room for improvement. We need to work together."

Dr. SB13 spoke of his educational background and many years in education.

Mrs. SB5, Mr. SB10, Mrs. SB11, and Dr. SB13 had formed a coalition and were running on the Democratic ticket. Mrs. SB5 and Dr. SB13 had cross-filed as Republicans as well.

Mr. SB12 was the only candidate not attending.

November 3, 1987 - Election Day. District voters elected an entire Democratic slate of school board members, including two candidates, Dr. SB13 and Mrs. SB5, who had cross-filed. According to the _Sherwood Independent_, the new team became a coalition in their opposition to the high school renovations project and carried that issue into the election. Elected to four-year terms on the board were incumbent Mrs. SB5, and newcomers Dr. SB13, Mr. SB10, Mrs. SB11, and Mr. SB12. Ousted were incumbents Mrs. SB1, current board president, Mr. SB2, current board vice president, and Mr. SB3, chairperson of the communications and public relations committee. All three defeated incumbents were in favor of the renovations project.

The vote totals for the eight school board candidates were:

Dr. SB13	5009
Mrs. SB5	4981
Mr. SB10	3128
Mrs. SB11	2964
Mr. SB12	2703
Mrs. SB1	2459
Mr. SB3	2259
Mr. SB2	2232

The municipal vote totals indicated support for the newcomers in all areas, but especially in the southern part of the district.

Interview Summaries

The second phase of data collection was the conducting of in-depth interviews with key participants in the project. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to discover as much as possible about the events surrounding the building project and the reactions of the key participants to those events. Each interview took approximately one hour to conduct. Each interview was taped and transcribed within twenty-four hours. Appendix D lists the key participants by pseudonym and the date which they were interviewed. The following is a summary of each interview conducted.

Mrs. SB1

Mrs. SB1 served eight years on the Sherwood School Board. Two of those years she served as president, the last two years. Mrs. SB1 takes pride in the amount of time and effort she put forth for the bemefit of the Sherwood School District. She remembered taking the annual tour of the high school building with the building and maintenance committee. "There was talk about replacing windows but it was apparent that we had to do something more to that building than just a face lift. It wasn't a building anyone could be proud of."

This led the board to a brainstorming session with the administration. "We asked what we would want in a building that would take us to the year 2000 and beyond. We came up with a lot of ideas." These ideas were presented to D&W who did the feasibility study. Mrs. SB1 remembered demographic studies as well; but it was the November 1985 meeting that stood out in her mind.

> We held it in the old building because we wanted people to see the condition it was in. We thoroughly discussed the feasibility study. I left that building feeling that the best option was to renovate. The community would support a pool at that time. They felt it was the right thing to do.

Mrs. SB1 remembered that the board was 100 percent behind the project until January 1987. Everything had been done at public meetings and there was always a portion of the meeting for community input. "We always made a plea for people to come in and express their concerns. I always take into account what people say. It might not make me change my mind, but they were listened to." Mrs. SB1 felt that it was really very few people who stirred up the controversy. Then, one at a time, the three board members came out in opposition to the project.

With respect to the referendum, Mrs. SB1 felt that the board had much more information than anyone in the community could have had to make a knowledgeable decision. "There are some who wish now that we had gone through with the referendum but it would have delayed us even further. There weren't any of us who felt the public would vote for a new building."

Mrs. SB1 felt strongly that the renovation project was an issue in the 1987 school board campaign and election, in fact, the only issue. However, it did not become an issue until after the primary or, she said, she would have cross-filed. Those who were running against her were opposed to the project. There was no doubt in Mrs. SB1's mind that the decision to renovate was related to her defeat, even though it was too late to stop the project. "Some people said, 'You are doing the right thing.' I could tell the opposition was very well organized - they came out in force."

Mr. SB2

Mr. SB2 had also served eight years on the Sherwood School Board. During that time he chaired a committee to study demographic patterns in the district. Mr. SB2 remembered the lack of lab space plus the general conditions of the rooms as being factors which led to the perceived need for a building project. "There was a certain pride in the community that we should have something better than what we had."

Mr. SB2 recalled three or four showings of the project plans to various "fathers of the community." He remembered no dissention at all, " until we started to get into the politics." One school board member alone raised objections to the project. That was one political entity. Geographically another political entity arose: those who wanted a more centrally located high school.

On the referendum issue Mr. SB2 felt:

> They should have run the referendum on the ballot - they should have gone along with it. I wanted to send an opinion-type letter to all the voters. I brought it up and it was rejected. I had a choice to make and I did what I thought was right.

Mr. SB2 felt that the school board election of 1987 was a one issue election. "You had a political situation where the issue switched from the idea of the renovation itself, to the idea, 'We are going to have our way - out with the bums!'" He felt that the press was very prejudicial in implying a lack of communication on the part of the board. He felt that the people were voting on emotions, built up very cleverly by the opposition. The vote was based on a single issue, which was not so much the school but a lack of doing what the voters wanted them to do.

> I already told them I was retiring after the election. The reason I was running was to open the place for a republican replacement. But the fact that we lost irritated me. There was hurt there. The public lost a lot of experience in these board members.

Mr. SB3

Mr. SB3 had served on the Sherwood School Board for ten years. During that time he was a member of the building and maintenance committee and chairperson of the communications and public relations committee. As a member of the building and maintenance committee, Mr. SB3 saw the high school building as having immense problems. This was what started the committee considering whether to build a new high school or catch the existing high school up to date. "We were in the decision phase a good year before the public knew about it, and two years before it became controversial." According to Mr. SB3, the need was apparent and so the feasibility study was done.

Mr. SB3 felt that the architect who did the feasibility study perceived that the building and maintenance committee was convinced that the best method was to refurbish the high school. He felt it was simple dollars. "The cost of building a new high school was twice as much, discounting the idea of purchasing land. It may not have been a reasonable assumption that this (selling the high school property and buying land) would be a wash."

Mr. SB3 recalled the public meeting at which the feasibility study was presented:

> We had it in room 202; it was packed. There were teachers asking some tough questions. A lot of tough questions were asked by the public. I was satisfied that there had been an airing of the feasibility study. The air was exploratory, questioning, curious. There was no one who stood up and said, "This is stupid!" What the teachers wanted was input. There were several people who spoke in favor of a new high school at that time.

Mr. SB3 still felt it made more sense to renovate. "Seventeen million versus 36 million is pretty clear in dollars and cents. New is always better, whether it's worth twice as much, I don't know."

Mr. SB3 felt that the renovations project was the only issue in the school board election of 1987. He felt that there were people, not candidates, who were misrepresenting facts in the lower part of the district. Mr. SB3 was also personally hurt that he was not supported by the community in the election.

> By the time this came about, I no longer felt that I represented the public. I felt that I was there, making up my own mind. I knew more than the public did. Whether or not that's the right attitude, I don't know.

Mr. SB4

Mr. SB4 was in his eighteenth year of service on the Sherwood School Board when he decided to retire at the end of his term, in December of 1987. During that time he served the board in many capacities, including president. At the time of his retirement he was on the finance committee and chairperson of the policy committee.

Mr. SB4 remembered the renovations project as starting with a $65,000 project to replace windows in the senior high school. This led to a brainstorming session with board members and administrators on a Saturday morning. "A lot of excitement came out of it, the swimming pool, for instance."

Mr. SB4 recalled that the board had spent $10,400 for the feasibility study and felt that it enlightened the people on the building and maintenance committee as far as a renovations project but that there was not very much communication between the committee and the board. "There was never really any information put forth on a new building versus a renovations project. The administration reached out and picked out a figure for a new building. That was the start of the problems."

Mr. SB4 felt that the district did not do all it should have to involve the public. He admitted that hindsight is easy, however, "to make the decision that the community cannot afford a new building - it's not up to the board to make that decision."

In terms of public participation, Mr. SB4 felt that the public got involved because they thought the project was just at the schematic level.

> That was when people came out of the woodwork. That was when the petitions started. School directors are elected officials, so you do get politically involved. It's the people who elect you. I don't feel that I can't listen to the people who put me there. On the contrary, they are the ones that fortified my feelings on this renovation. Initially I thought we had to do something, but not to that degree.

Mr. SB4 felt that there should have been a referendum. "The school directors had nothing to lose. The people should have chosen whether they wanted a new building or whether they wanted it renovated."

Mr. SB4 stated that he could not remember when an issue on the school board was as strong as the renovations issue. At the school board election of 1987 he felt as if the public had declared, "If you don't listen to us now, you'll listen at the polls."

> They were so organized. They had little ballots educating the people coming to the polls. It was a combined effort between the two parties. One of the signs read: Republicans and Democrats working together for a better education.

Mr. SB4 felt that the defeat of the three incumbent board members was predicated on the renovations issue.

> Politics is a stronghold in this area. It was unbelievable how the public showed their dissappointment in the directors. The election spoke for itself. I'm a committee-person. I was at the polls. You could see the politics unfolding.

Mrs. SB5

Mrs. SB5 is currently serving her eleventh year on the Sherwood School Board and her second year as president. She was the only successful incumbent in the 1987 election.

Mrs. SB5 felt that conditions of the high school building were apparent, the building needed cosmetics. "How we first got into this was by saying: Let's have someone take a look at replacing the windows."

In terms of procedures that were used to verify the need for a building project, Mrs. SB5 felt that was mainly building and maintenance committee work, and that the committee did not readily share information. "Research was being done by the committee. Minutes were not distibuted. So what you saw on the board agenda was what you got. You'd have no background to make a decision." Mrs. SB5 also felt that the feasibility study was incomplete. Because of the way the options were presented, she got the feeling that the decision was made, with or without the study.

> It was unfortunate, even back then, that the board did not start to listen to the public. As soon as reports were published the public started to come out and say, "What choices do we have?" They were given the same basic outline. The general public at the time was very concerned. They didn't want it.

It was the lack of public support that turned Mrs. SB5 against the project. "I look at my position. I am an elected representative. I am here because the people put me here. They are the ones that pay the taxes."

Mrs. SB5 recalls that the public got involved at budget time. They got vocal because they would rather have paid more mils per year and built a new school. She started to doubt whether the board was doing the right thing and found it hard to ignore the volume of public outcry. "I couldn't, in all good consciousness, sit on that board and vote for something that the public, who were paying the bills, did not want."

Mrs. SB5 remembered 1987 as, "the most heated school board election I've ever been aware of."

> It was the topic of conversation for anyone who was old enough to vote. There was an extremely high voter turnout. I did not campaign. I did not participate at all. I could see that change was coming. I expected change. I was everwhelmed at the volume of the change. I was not the target because of my position against the project and sticking up for public opinion.

Mrs. SB5 felt that the renovations issue was definitely related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members. "The people were outraged that they were told they had no say in how we spend their money." As the only successful incumbent, Mrs. SB5 felt that her stand on renovations had a partial effect on the vote. However,

> I'd like to think my record on the board had an effect on the vote. They didn't go to vote against me because of renovations. I'd like to think they voted for me because of my record.

Mr. SB6

Mr. SB6 is currently serving his eighth year as a Sherwood School Board member. He was chairperson of the building and maintenance committee from December 1985 through December 1987. He has decided not to run for re-election when his term is up in December 1989.

Mr. SB6, as a member of the building and maintenance committee, saw what he termed "horrendous" and "sub-standard" conditions of the high school building as the beginning of the perceived need for a building project. He recalled the brainstorming session with the administration: "I have always been an advocate of five, ten, twenty year plans. Where are we going? Should we put $100,000 into window replacement if the building is sub-standard and has a leaky roof?"

The brainstorming session led to alternatives and the feasibility study done by D&W. As a board member, Mr. SB6 relied on the superintendent and the central administration to digest all the information, summarize, and recommend. He remembered the public meeting at which the feasibility study was presented:

> It was an advertised meeting in the '31 building. D&W presented their program and we asked for public input. There was very little concern for the project. A couple of teachers. It was more interest in what their involvement might be in the process.

Mr. SB6 felt that it was the superintendent's conservative attitude which curtailed public involvement.

> I came back from a School Board Association workshop. I wanted to start an advisory group. Dr. S1, the superintendent, refused. He didn't want any involvement with the citizens. The public was not invited to get involved with it. He felt public involvement was having a board meeting and asking those present for their opinion. We asked for a PR person to assist us in getting the word out. He said, "You don't sell your product." We just wanted to inform.

Mr. SB6 noted that once the board presented the preliminary designs, slowly the public seemed to come out and question what the board was doing. But he felt it was too late:

> The majority of architectural fees are paid up-front. They earn their money during the design process. At that point we were committed to the project. It wasn't a matter of turning around and saying, "Let's reverse our decision." You make a decision; you get on with life.

Mr. SB6 definitely felt the renovations were an issue in the school board election of 1987. "The momemtum that had built at the time was hard to counteract. There wasn't a positive effort to involve the public." He felt that the defeat of the three incumbent board members was related to the renovations issue, even though the project moved on unincumbered by the election.

> The people who came out had their own special interests. We listened to what they were saying but no one could give us a valid reason why. I still think we made the right decision.
>
> I think the public made a bad mistake when they did what they did. They cost the district five million dollars in delays caused by the Act 34 hearings. The project started a year late. The square foot construction costs jumped in that year.

Mr. SB7

Mr. SB7 is serving his tenth year on the Sherwood School Board. He has served the board in many capacities. He was president of the board at the time of the feasibility study. Mr. SB7 has announced that he will retire from the board when his term expires in December 1989.

Mr. SB7 was also on the walk-through of the building and maintenance committee which highlighted the need for some major repairs to the high school building. That prompted the initial study to get prices on what it might cost to update the 1931 building. "There was a consensus of opinion that maybe we better spend some money to update the '32 ['31] building."

As a result of that committee reporting to the board, it was decided to have the feasibility study done, according to Mr. SB7. He remembered the meeting when the feasibility study was presented to the public:

> There was a public discussion on the feasibility study. That all preceded our going out and interviewing architects, hiring an architect. At that time, to build a new building was estimated to be ten to twelve milliion dollars additional. That was the factor as for as my personal reasons: to protect the financial integrity of the district.
>
> There were no negative comments at that meeting. I don't recall anyone standing up and saying, "You're foolish! Don't spend any more money on these buildings. Let's build a new one!"

Mr. SB7 believed that the issue became a political one when the price of renovations escalated from 12 million to 17 million dollars. He felt that the community became involved in January 1987, after the project was underway. He felt it was the petitions that caused Mr. SB4 and Mrs. SB5 to change their minds about the project.

> This is where the politics came into play. If you want to get re-elected you go along with the choice that's the strongest. You forget about your own personal feelings, what you're on the board for. You protect the community. I thought it was tunnel vision. People had their own personal interests.

Mr. SB7 wordered if the citizens of Sherwood ever supported the project. He admittted, "The stronger members of the board, the majority, made the decision that it was the right thing to do. We were going to do it to protect the silent majority that we were elected to represent."

Mr. SB7 has had a change of heart regarding the referendum. "Boards don't want their responsibility taken away by someone else. But hindsight, it probably should have been done, if it was worded properly."

Mr. SB7 definitely felt that the renovations were an issue in the school board election of 1987. Specifically, it was the way the board was spending the taxpayers' money, whether the money was being spent wisely. He worked at three different polling places on election day and felt that the high school building was the issue at the polls. In addition, he felt that the renovations project was the cause of the defeat of the three incumbent candidates. "A political process ... well organized. When I see what happened here, I probably would have voted for a new school."

Mr. SB8

Mr. SB8 has been on the Sherwood School Board for twenty years, serving in several capacities. He is currently vice president of the board and chairperson of the finance committee.

Mr. SB8 recalled that in the judgement of the majority of board directors, the high school building needed windows replaced for comfort in the building itself. "That developed into the thought that we needed some more classrooms, and we needed some growth, and with that it came to the point of saying, 'Let's have a feasibility study.'" The result of the feasibility study, in Mr. SB8's opinion, was that it was poorly conceived with a lot of areas that hadn't been taken into consideration.

> There was never any consideration given to the traffic and parking problems or alternate uses of the buildings as they existed. Also, no consideration was given to the fact that the building sat at the corner of the district and that growth in the district was in the extreme opposite corner. Nor to the value of the ground. I called for an assessment of the current high school property and never got it.

Mr. SB8 addressed most of these issues at public board meetings, beginning in January 1987, and the community soon rose up. He felt that the district did nothing to solicit public participation in the decision to renovate.

> A group contacted me and tried to gain as much information as they could. They had also contacted an attorney. The situaion could have been turned around had they started three to four months before. Those who were the nucleus of the people involved, who wanted to change the situation, started coming to board meetings and speaking.

Although Mr. SB8 was not an active participant in the school board election of 1987, he definitely felt that the renovations project was an issue. "They were walking into the polling place with an idea in their minds that no one was going to change. That idea was going to be expressed on the ballot." Mr. SB8 had heard a comment that this was the first time that the citizenry came forth with an absolute conviction that something had to be done and they were going to do it. He felt that they overwhelmingly did.

Mr. SB8 felt that the decision to renovate the high school was strongly related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members. "The people thought they were not being heard; that this was a group of people who were paying absolutely no attention to the citizen voice, no attention to the cost, no attention to the educational system." Mr. SB8 concluded:

> If I had been a millionaire, I would have personally taken the board on myself. It's hard for me to come into the building. I view this as the biggest 22 million dollar rip-off that could have happened. There's a lot of disruption in the life of the community because of it.

Mr. SB9

Mr. SB9 was elected to the board in 1985. He came on board shortly after the meeting presenting the feasibility study. He serves as chairperson of the policy committee. He remembered attending the meeting even though he had not yet been sworn in as a board member. He felt that the tone of the meeting was fine and that there were no concerns over choosing the renovations option over the other two options presented.

> We proceeded along those lines for about a year. The issue was addressed at the majority of school board meetings as to the status of the project. The next step was selection of the architect which occurred during the following year.

Mr. SB9 was puzzled not only by the lack of public comment at the time, but lack of board member comment at the time.

> The first time I heard any board member say anything negative about the project was in the Spring of 1987. At that point the feasibility study had been completed and approved 1 1/2 years earlier. We had selected an architect and had been proceeding along what appeared to be a straight course.

Mr. SB9 saw the purchasing of properties adjacent to the high school to be the first point of contention. The board voted to purchase them anyway. The second critical decision, as Mr. SB9 saw it, was the call for referendum. Mr. SB9 was very much against the referendum.

> I felt it was our role as school directors to be informed on the issues and to make the decisions. That was one of the clearest things I had to decide in my tenure on the board. After spending so much time researching the issue, if we weren't qualified to decide, why should we force the public to make the decision?
>
> The referendum created an awful lot of controversy. Then, anyone who was against the project could come back and say, "You don't even want to consider our opinion." My feeling was still that I am elected to make the best decisions I can for the district. I am not elected to be a politician.

Mr. SB9 felt that it was obvious that the renovations project was an issue in the school board election of 1987 and that it was definitely related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members. "There were four members running for re-election and three of them lost." Mr. SB9 felt that the vote on the referendum was one factor. The fact that there were three Act 34 hearings kept it in the press. A third factor was, "we were spending money on the high school at the same time we were feeling the financial impact of the teacher settlement. That wasn't helping the budget at all."

Mr. SB9 thought it was interesting that the five people elected in 1987 were all in opposition to the renovations project.

> I am going to vote on issues according to my judgement. I am going to exercise my judgement. The project would have been more successful if we had spent more time planning it - really putting more concentration into how to implement the project instead of whether to implement the project.

Mr. SB10

Mr SB10 is serving his second year on the Sherwood School Board. He successfully defeated incumbent candidates in the 1987 election with a write-in campaign in the primary and by running as a Republican on the Democratic ticket in the general election.

Mr. SB10 remembered hearing that the window replacement was the start of the renovations project. "When you look at a particular thing like that you lose sight of the whole. That became my pre-occupation with this project. It was conceived out on a limb without considering the whole picture of the district."

As a citizen who had been involved in government for about thirty years, Mr. SB10 felt relatively unaware of what was hapening with the building project.

> I was told that there were studies done and meetings held. Communications were very poor. The methods used to get public input were less than what the current board perceives as being adequate. I don't think there was an attempt to go out and get a lot of public involvement by asking individuals to serve on committees.

Mr. SB10 was contacted by Mr. SB8 because of his involvement in the schools. He got a group of parents together, the Parents for Quality Education. They personally contacted board members and set up the February 11, 1987 presentation.

Mr. SB10 spoke in opposition to the renovations project at all three Act 34 hearings. He recognized that different people were against the project for different reasons. The group he was active with, from the lower part of the district, wanted renovations stopped, and a new centrally located high school built. Others, from the Sherwood borough, wanted the high school out of Sherwood for their own reasons. Often problems with parking were the reasons given.

Mr. SB10 described his group's efforts in the primary:

> We formed a Republican/Democrat committee. We had chairmen and fundraising. We got on the Democratic ticket so we were definitely on the ballot and then tried to get Republicans to vote for us. I thought we did well.
>
> There were some people who thought we should have made the project the focus of our effort, and because we didn't, we did not get the board to change its position. We started way too late. The feeling was that, had we been able to show the incumbent candidates that they could be defeated or close to defeated in the primary, they would have gotten the word that the public really cared.

Mr. SB10 felt that this became more evident after the general election. He felt that the renovations project was the key issue in the school board election of 1987, and was directly related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members. "They were noticably stunned and visibly shaken. They didn't realize how little support they had. Had they realized six months earlier, I think they would have backed off (of the renovations issue.)"

Mrs. SB11

Mrs. SB11 was elected to the Sherwood School Board in 1987. She was involved with the Parents for Quality Education group, and she spoke in opposition to the renovations project at each of the Act 34 hearings. Mrs. SB11 served the board as chairperson of the communications and public relations committee.

Mrs SB11 recalled that the projected lack of space in the high school was one reason that the board began to look at alternatives. She remembered demographic studies that were done and census data that were examined. She had read the feasibility study as a private citizen and had the following reactions:

> I don't think it verified anything. It was supposed to examine alternatives. There were only two options that it looked at: One, renovations, in detail, and the other, the junior high flip-flop, in less detail. There were only a few pages on building a new school. That was something I said when I was campaigning. The option of building a new school was not examined thoroughly. It was very biased.

Mrs. SB11 attended board meetings long before she became a school board candidate. She remembered information being disseminated through public meetings and the media. "At the school board meetings, things were in a presentation format. There was little opportunity to ask questions or give input. It wasn't solicited."

Mrs. SB11 became involved with the Parents for Quality Education because she wanted the board to listen to citizens' concerns and to be more open. She also admitted that people were against the renovations project for different reasons. She felt that the people in the southern end of the district wanted the high school to be more centrally located. "People in the southern end of the district have to travel twenty minutes to get to the high school, and when you have active kids, that's a lot."

Mrs. SB11 felt that the renovations issue was discussed during the campaign and that it was truly the "issue of the day." In terms of the election, she felt that the answer was not so obvious.

> I don't think it was so much the decision to renovate the high school that caused this to happen but the process that was used. The decision was already made. Some people still thought they could stop it, but for the most part they couldn't. It was more the process: people believing that they did not have to listen to the citizens; and the attitude. That was what offended people.

Mrs. SB11 felt that the call for the referendum definitely effected the outcome of the election.

> They could have listened to the call of the people for the referendum. They were not secure enough to do that. If they had, I believe the election would have turned out differently. They would have come out looking a whole lot better and the results probably would have been different.

Mrs. SB11 resigned from the Sherwood School Board on July 24, 1989 for personal reasons. Mr. SB4 came out of retirement and was appointed to her position.

Mr. SB12

Mr. SB12 is serving his second year on the Sherwood School Board. He has an excellent background in the trades and is an active member of the building and maintenance committee. He had previously served as a Democratic Committee-Person, and is only the second Democrat ever to be elected to the Sherwood School Board.

Mr. SB12 was not involved in the school system prior to his election. Although a long-time resident, his children attended parochial school. He had been following the Sherwood situation in the newspapers and he started to get phone calls from people who knew he was interested in politics. They were infuriated by the alleged comments by board members. He started to come out to board meetings. "The two main things that brought it (renovations) from the back burner to the front burner as far as the public was concerned, was the referendum, which they chose to ignore, and the (alleged) remark made by one of the board members."

Mr. SB12 was referring to comments made at the March 23, 1987 board meeting, when the motion for a referendum was defeated. Several board members who were in opposition to the referendum voiced their opinions that since they had sifted through two years of information surrounding the project, they were more informed than the public to decide the issue. These comments were interpreted by one newspaper account to read that board members contended that residents could not make "informed or intelligent" decisions. This comment enraged many citizens.

Mr. SB12 felt that the renovations issue was the "paramount" issue in the 1987 school board election. "Quite frankly, that was probably the only way that a minority party was able to get elected on the board. I was only the second Democrat ever to be elected to the Sherwood School Board."

Mr. SB12 felt that the renovations issue certainly effected the election as well. "The public was so displeased with the project, they showed what the public can do when they get so annoyed." He felt that what happened should be a warning to the present board as well:

> If we don't do something about our financial condition, the same thing can happen again, and it will happen again. The same people who orchestrated the first thing are still in place, and they could just as easily put it back together again and come up with the same results. It just shows that the public does have an effect on the political process.

Dr. SB13

Dr. SB13 served as superintendent of the Sherwood School District from 1980 to 1983, when he retired. He was elected to the Sherwood School Board in 1987. Since then he has chaired the building and maintenance committee and also sits on the finance committee.

Dr. SB13 recalled that the renovations project got its start with the window replacement in the 1931 building.

> From there it just grew. Someone was finally convinced that they needed an addition to this building. A lot of people in the community, including myself, thought that this was the biggest mistake that could have been made. When they built this addition in 1957 the State Department said the site was too small. That's when they bought land across County Line Road. The state said no additions on the site.

Dr. SB13 remembered when the site was an ideal one. The senior high was located near the population center of the district. "Now the population center has shifted and this was not the best place anymore. You have a prime location that could have been sold."

Dr. SB13 agreed that all of a sudden the public became concerned, that this was something they were not in favor of. "They did start signing petitions. We had 1800 signatures which we presented to the board. This is where the politics entered in. They wouldn't listen. They were going to go ahead."

Dr. SB13 felt that the renovations project was absolutely an issue in the school board election of 1987.

> I went to eleven of thirteen polling places just to let people know I was out, talking. My friend and his wife were giving out pamphlets. I don't think anyone thought we had a chance but it was amazing how overwhelming the vote was.

Dr. SB13 had no doubt that the renovations issue effected the election. He felt the people thought that even at this late date the project could be stopped. "If we had had two or three more months it could have been stopped. The board was anxious to get this done."

Dr. S1

Dr. S1 served the Sherwood School District for 31 1/2 years, as a teacher, high school principal, and superintendent. He served as superintendent from January 1983 until he retired in December 1987.

Dr. S1 remembered well the major repairs that were needed at the high school building.

> I recall a proposal for new windows for the old building at a cost of $50,000. As we started looking at the other aspects of the building, we saw that it was more than just outside, more than just appearance. The heating system was failing, the roofs were leaking, the brickwork needed attention.

This led to the brainstorming session. "We met on a Saturday. Most board members were there, my administrative staff was there. We had a good day. We were looking at education into the 21st century." The options they came up with were given to D&W. Dr. S1 agreed that the feasibiity study was somewhat slanted toward renovations.

> They did some rather superficial studies of the other options. I don't think they looked at those nearly as seriously as they did updating this building. The board had renovations in mind. I don't think at that point they seriously entertained any of the other alternatives.

Dr. S1 recalled that the public was very passive at first. From time to time he would get phone calls or comments, all in support of the project. When the cost of the project increased, that's when the public got involved.

> You had three people on the board who were opposed to renovations. They said they wanted to build a new school. I know a couple of them would not have voted for a new school. It would have cost much more and created more of a burden on the taxpayers. The idea came up much too late. If there was a feeling from board members or community members, it should have come up way back at the point of the feasibility study.

In terms of what the school district did to solicit public involvement in the project, Dr. S1 felt:

> I don't think we did everything we could have to inform the public. We did everything we traditionally did to inform the public. The public had the opportunity, if the public was interested, to get involved, to come to meetings, to look at the plans, to raise objections. The public had that opportunity. Nobody was hiding renovations, nobody was hiding the twelve million. Nobody was hiding the fact that it was going to go here.

Dr. S1 felt that the renovations project was an issue in the 1987 school board election and was definitely related to the defeat of three incumbent board members.

> There was really nothing a new board could do. The project had been underway for some time. The defeat of those board members was simply a signal on the part of the public that they had voted for something which, at that point, the public was opposed to. Most of the public realized it was too late to change the course of the project. But it wasn't too late to show their feelings.

Dr. S2

Dr. S2 has served the Sherwood School District for 23 years, as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. He became assistant superintendent in 1983, when Dr. S1 became superintendent. He became superintendent in 1987, when Dr. S1 retired. In both positions he was a member of all district committees.

Dr. S2 remembered that the project got started by the building and maintenance committee. "For capital outlay - they wanted to spruce-up the '31 building. The cost of the windows was $68,000. Then it blossomed."

Dr. S2 has wondered whether D&W were the proper firm to do the feasibility study.

> I don't think they had ever been in the school business until they did some work for the district. They said that up-front. There was not a lot of financial data. That was the biggest flaw. Did the board really have enough accurate financial data?

Looking at the controversy that the project started, Dr. S2 thought that the district's organized communications approach was less than adequate. Early on, Dr. S2 had contacted a public relations specialist from a neighboring district. He submitted a seven-page proposal, but it never got any further than Dr. S1. The chief vehicles for communication were the local newspaper and the district newsletter. After the first Act 34 hearing, Dr. S2 noticed that parent involvement really escalated. As the project estimates started to rise the public became more vocal.

Dr. S2 felt that the renovations project was indeed an issue in the school board election of 1987. The petitions had been around, the call for the referendum had been turned down. People started having coffee-klatches. What Dr. S2 heard the public say at meetings was, "Open up the channels of communications. Give the people of the community more of a say." The opposing candidates promised, "If we get on the board, we're really going to open up communications, and really have community involvement. The community will have a much more active voice in the decision-making process."

Mrs. PR

Mrs. PR became Communication and Information Specialist for the district in January 1989. Prior to that, she was a reporter for The Sherwood Independent for fifteen years. The local paper comes out weekly and is, "the only game in town." Mrs. PR was the reporter for all school district meetings and events. She attended and reported on all board meetings and public hearings regarding the renovations project.

Mrs. PR saw irony in the fact that the project got off the ground by looking at window replacement due to energy loss. "The building and maintenance committee started to really look at the high school and say: This place needs help." Mrs. PR felt that the board depended on the feasibility study and went with its recommendations.

> I don't think it addressed the new school concept, except in a cursory manner. If that's what the school board was basing its decision on, then that's why they went for renovations. There were politics. The school's always been in Sherwood.

Mrs. PR covered the November 1985 public meeting when the feasibility study was presented.

> It was quite well attended. There were public questions. There wasn't anything totally "anti," not like the ground swell that came later. There were a lot of questions on how it would would work and what would you do. I don't think anybody knew at that point what it would cost. I don't remember people asking: Should we build a new school?

Mrs. PR felt that the public got involved only after Mr. SB8 started to become vocal in opposition to the project.

> After it got in the newspaper, and the public saw what Mr. SB8 was saying, that prompted the people to start to think and come to board meetings. A lot of it came from the southern part of the district. The "yuppies" - a lot of new families moving in. They didn't have old roots and they thought: Let's move the high school by us. Let's build a new one.

As a district resident, Mrs. PR felt that the 1987 school board election was a one issue election.

> There could have been so many issues. What about curriculum? What about the middle school transition? All these things fell by the wayside and it was only one issue. You're either for the high school or against the high school and that's how you're going to vote.

Mrs. PR felt "without a doubt" that the renovations project was the only issue in the school board election of 1987 and that it was related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members. She felt that a neighboring newspaper had much to do with that.

> The district was tried and hung in the newspaper - especially by The Reporter. the editorials concerning the project ... very strong, very slanted. A lot of people in the general public take what's written in the newspaper as gospel. A lot of what happened was a result of what was in the paper. People read what Mr. SB8 said and

> started believing that the project was the worse thing that could happen, thus the election.

Mr. CM1

Mr. CM1 has been a teacher in the Sherwood School District for 23 years. He has been a district resident for that long as well. He has three children who attend the district schools. He is a respected high school faculty member and a department chairperson.

Mr. CM1 felt that two things led to the perceived need for a new building project: the state of the building and the changing population of the district. The high school building was crowded and outdated. The population growth seemed to bring about the middle school concept, in Mr. CM1's mind, and that led to having the ninth grade in the high school.

Mr. CM1 was not aware of anything that the district did to solicit public input into the decision to renovate the high school.

> At the time of that meeting, the project was pretty much decided. It wasn't: What should we do? It was: Here's what we're going to do. The only time we were consulted as a faculty was after the decision was made and after the plans were almost all done.

According to Mr. CM1, that's when people started to realize that the board did not intent to build a new school. "That's when people really started to come out to board meetings. That's when people like Mr. SB10 became really interested. That's why they ran for school board and made it."

Mr. CM1 attended one school board meeting where the assessment of the existing high school property was the issue.

> The community was arguing - what about building another school? One citizen asked how much the property was assessed at. I remember the look on Mr. SB6's face, because he had to say we never had it assessed, and the people screamed. They were angry at that.

Mr. CM1 felt that the renovation project was an issue in the school board election of 1987. "Oh yes, that was the whole deal. If you could cut it down to a nutshell; citizens voted those people out - these people in - because of renovations and not building a new school. No question at all."

Mr. CM1 felt the renovation project was "absolutely" related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members. "This was not a politically active place. This movement proved that something political could happen besides the Republicans squashing the Democrats all the time. You just can't appreciate how unchanging it was before this all happened."

Mr. CM2

Mr. CM2 has been a teacher in the Sherwood School district for 21 years. He kept himself quite informed about the project and spoke at several of the public meetings.

Mr. CM2 remembered hearing about the feasibility study.

> There was a rumor at the time that they (D&W) were

> told what they were supposed to find. The school board made it clear that they were looking for the best financial option. D&W was able to show, at least on paper, that the cheapest way to go was renovating the high school.

Mr. CM2 was present at the November 1985 meeting and recalled much public interest. "All the chairs were full and backed into the hall. That's how interested the public was." He remembered that people did raise objections and bring up the question of building a new school. However, Mr. CM2 felt that it was obvious that the board was leaning in favor of renovations because of the cost.

As the cost of the renovations escalated, Mr. CM2 remembered the public becoming more vocal.

> Every chance they were given to speak publicly they did. The board kept saying that the decision had been made as far as which of the three options, but they still wanted input. People would come to those meetings and grab the microphone, and still argue about the decision which had been made.

Mr. CM2 referred to the 1987 school board election as, "The year they threw the bums out." He remembered the project being discussed by other teachers who were residents of the district. The feeling was that there might be a reversal of the decision.

> Of course they moved those bulldozers in so quick. It was as if they thought if they dug a couple of corners up it would be too late to do anything about it. Part of that had to do with the election. They thought people would say there's no sense in getting some different people on to the board because it was too late, the project had already been started.

Mr. CM2 felt that the decision to renovate the high school was related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members.

> It was revenge. Our public hardly ever gets involved in the school board. The school board has always been distant and arrogant and the public hardly ever cares. This is one of the first times that the public actually stood up and said: We want X. And the school board did Y. It really made them angry. So what else can you do in a democracy? You throw the bums out.

Mrs. CM3

Mrs. CM3 is a life long resident of Sherwood. She has two children who attend Sherwood schools and she runs a business in the town of Sherwood. Mrs. CM3 spoke at all three Act 34 hearings in support of the renovations project. However, she had not become involved the the project from the start. In fact, much of the earlier happenings were very vague in her mind until she started to do some investigating of her own.

> It was right before my first one was going into high school. It seemed so far away to me at that time. I was involved in other things. When I suddenly felt that immediacy right before the project was going through, I thought: How could I have not been listening to this all along? I had ignored it for a long time.

Mrs. CM3 remembered the negative feelings that were present at the public board meetings. She went with friends who were against the project and started to become annoyed herself. Then she started to become more informed.

> At the board meetings, there was the same core of people who came feeling negative, asking the same questions over and over again. I didn't think they had listened to the board's answers on what they had studied before hand. They would go out

> and still complain about the same things. I had heard a different answer. I went back and started to do some reading. I objected on the basis of taxes: I can't afford this renovation let alone a school that's going to cost me twice as much. I was hearing answers that satisfied me, and seeing people who weren't listening to the answers.

As Mrs. CM3 started to educate herself as to the history of the project, she began to feel that there had been an opportunity for the community to have its input.

> Early on, I went to the library. They gave me a whole stack of The Independent's. Every two weeks after a board meeting there was an update on the high school. Every open meeting - it was all there. That was the injustice of it all. Even if I had been swayed toward a new school, I thought there had been a democratic process. It was unfair to turn it around at this point and study it more. If something had been done wrong - yes. But that's not what they were saying.

Mrs. CM2 spoke in favor of the renovations project at all three of the Act 34 hearings.

> There were a lot of negative things. I considered saying: I'll pass. I was nervous. Why subject myself to this? It's not going to make a difference. Look at all these people. If I have something I believe in strongly, I couldn't let it go by without having my say.

Mrs. CM2 had a business in the town of Sherwood. She was familiar with the attitudes of people in town. She saw changes in the population of the district as being an issue in the school board election of 1987.

> I see the attitudes of the people in town. I see a great difference between them and the people in the developments in the southern part of the district. That's middle-class suburbia. They have different aspirations. They're professional families. The values of a suburban type atmosphere were being put on the whole renovations process. A suburban looking high school would not

> have changed what was going on in the school. The place to get these things was not in a new building but to get involved in curriculum. I felt we had a conflict in values. I don't think the essense was the validity of the renovations. It was a conflict in values and lifestyle.

Mrs. CM3 saw the defeat of the three incumbent board members as being related to the renovations project.

> I know people who were involved in orchestrating that defeat. They said to me: "Next we're going in to get the other members who were on the board at the same time." They really wanted to wipe the slate clean. The next time around, they wanted it their way.

Mr. CM4

Mr. CM4 is a private citizen who lives in the borough of Sherwood. He was born and raised in Sherwood and is currently retired. He has children who went through the Sherwood School District. Mr. CM4 spoke in opposition to the renovations project at two of the Act 34 hearings.

Mr. CM4 and his wife had followed the renovations project from the start. He was aware that the idea started with a need to replace windows. "The next thing they decided was that we needed a roof. They kept adding little bits on. Then somebody got the brainstorm that we didn't have enough rooms. That was when they started pushing."

Mr. CM4 felt that the school district did practically nothing to verify the need for a building project, other than the feasibility study. He also went to the Sherwood library and started to do some investigating. He felt that he had found information that was contrary to information given by the board. He made up his mind to get up and talk.

> It's hard to prove things about school boards unless you sit there. I brought up things and they never refuted them. You'll find things in the Sherwood library that they'll tell you is not true. But it's in writing. They can't deny it.

Mr. CM4 felt that the renovations project got pushed through because the public did not understand everything. He felt that people didn't know what was going on because they believed the board. "When you're spending my money, I should watch you. The taxpayers didn't do it because they didn't care." When he felt that the situation had gotten too bad, he and his wife went out and got petitions signed. They went door to door, and also stood on street corners in town in order to get signatures for the petitions. It was Mr. CM4 who presented the petitions to the board.

Mr. CM4 and his friends wanted to stop the renovations project. They hired a lawyer in order to fight it. They wrote letters to the State Department of Education in an attempt to stop the renovations. According to Mr. CM4, the response from the Department of Education was that his group could stop the project if they got a lawyer and pushed quickly. "Unless we went to that, the law is so written that you can't stop it, because legally they (the board) has a right."

Mr. CM4 felt that they had not moved quickly enough. "If I make up my mind to sue you, I should do it today, before you get a chance to get ready for me. We lost it because we had not been out in the world and fought. They had a couple of business people."

Although Mr. CM4 spoke in opposition to the renovations project at all three Act 34 hearings, he felt that the hearings themselves were a waste of time. He said the Department of Education told his group that the hearings were just a formality. "If we had a lawyer in the beginning and a few more people with nerve, we would have stopped it. I'm not sorry I did it. I learned a lot."

Mr. CM4 felt that the renovations project was not an issue in the school board election of 1987, "Most of us knew that it was settled. All we wanted to do now was get rid of the lousy bums that did it, and hope that we could stop it by having a re-vote, which we couldn't do."

However, Mr. CM4 did feel, "beyond any question of doubt," that the decision to renovate the high school was related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members.

> I was at every poll. I spent a lot of time. I think there was increased voter turn out because of this issue. I think we had more votes in the school board election than we've ever had, because they never cared. There's no law that says I can't go to the polls and say, "Let's vote them out."

Ms. CM5

Ms. CM5 has been a teacher in the Sherwood School district for thirteen years. She had previously taught in the high school building, but is currently teaching in one of the district's middle schools. She is serving her third year as president of the teachers' association. Ms. CM5 is a resident of the borough of Sherwood and a member of the Sherwood Borough Zoning Board. She attends almost all of the school board meetings and spoke at all three of the Act 34 hearings.

Ms. CM5 remembered the poor conditions of the building which led to the perceived need for a building project. "There were major cosmetic type things that needed to be done. Also, asbestos needed to be removed." She also recalled demographics, deterioration of the building and lack of parking space as being issues which helped to verify the need for the building project. But these were immediate, rather than long-range items. "There wasn't too much in the way of future planning, looking long-range. I don't think building on another site was ever really a serious consideration. It was looked at very lightly."

Ms. CM5 did not feel that the feasibility study had been seriously done. Lacking in particular was a look at the total value of building versus renovating.

> At this point in time it would have been cheaper to build. At that point in time they would not have had the money to buy land before selling the high school land, or leveling it, and selling it off as building lots. I brought that out at a school board meeting. The individual building lots would have brought in a bundle. It's zoned commercial on one side and residential on the other. It would have been extremely marketable.

Ms. CM5 recalled the teachers being given a survey in June of 1985, asking what renovations they would like to see done. "The list was more like repair-type things. It was not made known to us what was expected." Thus she felt that the decision to renovate had been made before 1985, before the feasibility study. Ms. CM5 recognized the gap in public concern from 1985 to 1987. She attributed that to the fact that the public was not informed. "No public input was solicited. The closer we got to the Act 34 hearings, the more interest came from the community."

Ms. CM5 recalled the petitions and the call for referendum. She felt that this gap in communication led to the events of the 1987 school board election.

> I think that's why so many members of the board went by the wayside: lack of listening to the public. When the public became aware of what was happening, that was the ultimate "touche" back to them. It showed how outraged the public was at the way they had handled the project.

Ms. CM5 felt there was only one issue in the school board election of 1987. She described the Meet the Candidates Night, which was sponsored by the teachers' association.

> We didn't discuss a whole lot more other than the renovations project and the degree of pubic input. It was not intended to put anyone of the defensive. It was more open-ended. People who were on the board seemed to keep the same attitude: We did the right thing.

Ms. CM5 felt that the decision to renovate the high school was definitely related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members.

> The public saw the attitude of the board members. There was a lack of trust based on a lack of communication, when the public tried to get their input, they were so stifled, put down, not

> welcome. They saw who they had elected and what they had become. If you can't trust who you elected, what do you do? Next chance you get, you elect somebody else.

Mr. A1 and Mr. A2

Mr. A1 and his associate, Mr. A2, are architects in a major city within one hour's traveling time of Sherwood. Mr. A1's firm, SCA, was hired by the Sherwood school board on March 10, 1986 to provide architectural services for the senior high renovations project. Their recommendation was approved unanimously by the Sherwood school board. The board had interviewed eight architects relative to the senior high renovations project. The firm has many years experience, including working with school districts in new building and renovations projects.

Mr. A1 and Mr. A2 had both read the feasibility study. It was given to them before their interview for the job. Mr. A1 said, "By reading that, I know they were worried about overcrowding and accomodating the students." Mr. A2 agreed, "The middle school concept was being studied at the same time as the expansion of the high school. It was really overcrowding and planning for future enrollment."

Mr. A1 was not sure how the public had been involved in the decision to renovate the high school. "It is my impression that the decision was already made when we were hired. We were hired to renovate." Mr. A2 recalled making several presentations to the school board during the summer of 1986. The first full public presentation was in the fall of 1986 at the request of the high school principal. "At that point, the scope of the work had really been finalized. The scope of the work was finalized at the conclusion of the programming phase." As far as public input, Mr. A2 felt,

> It depends on how you look at it. The board is an extension of the public in theory, so the board is acting on the public's behalf. We met with the board that summer to show them what the design and scope of the work was.

The first time the firm was asked to think about a new building was in July 1986 at the request of Mr. SB6, chairperson of the building and maintenance committee. Mr. A1 remembered that the question came up at a board meeting. "It was prior to the first board presentation, because we had the information there. It wasn't done in any great detail, but it was a schematic budget number."

Mr. A1 discussed the possibility of reversing the decision.

> At any point, it would have cost the district a reasonable amount of money to go back and re-design. They would have lost what they had paid us in fees up to that point. Corporations are more willing to say, "That's not what we want. Stop right there and go back." School boards, being political bodies, will only do that if there is an absolute revolution or a clear cut reason to do it.

Mr. A2 added:

> There's no such thing as, "beyond the turning point," because everything we're doing is on paper, literally, until the shovel's in the ground. But there are some real problems - $600,000 - To say at that point, "We're going to recind that." That's a tough decision to make if you're on the school board. I think they were committed. If it was only one million more to

> build a new school, they wouldn't have hesitated to blow $600,000 to save money overall. But for ten million dollars more, they were very reluctant.

Mr. A1 felt that there had been an opportunity for public input. "I've seen school districts where they've been much tougher. I thought the public had an opportunity for say. I'm sure minds were made up in some cases. There was an awful lot of time spent listening to arguments."

Mr. A2 felt that some decisions made regarding the project were a direct result of community input. "The decision to air condition the school was partly based on the idea: If we had a new school, it would be air conditioned. So we better air condition the old school."

Mr. A2 recalled the petitions and the group which hired a lawyer and sent letters to the State Department of Education.

> They threw the Department of Education into a fit because they didn't know what was going on. The Department's position is that these are board issues. The purpose of the Act 34 hearing is to eliminate boards going off and doing crazy things and telling the public to go pound sand. As long as the Act 34 process has been followed, and the rest of the PlanCon process went through, the Department treats a project that's voted five to four the same as one that's voted nine to zero.

Mr. A2 felt that the renovations project was obviously an issue with the public and was related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members in the school board election of 1987.

> The public voted the incumbents out. The people who were the vocal opponents of the

> project, and of the board, all were elected. And they weren't even running on the established party. It was quite a coup.
>
> During the campaigning there were comments about the public pressure from board members. The negative comments on the project were something that every member of the board was aware of. I don't recall anyone saying, "We shouldn't do that because we won't get re-elected."

Mr. Al felt that the board members who were defeated had been doing a good job. "The board was meeting, making decisions that were carefully considered. A lot of people didn't agree with the decisions, but it was a rational board."

Mr. S

Mr. S has been the solicitor for the Sherwood School District for twenty-five years. His firm is located in a small town adjacent to Sherwood. Mr. S was present at all board meetings and public hearings related to the project.

Mr. S was aware that the demographics in the Sherwood area had been changing. "The demographics indicated that the additional spaces would be needed for the next several years and thereafter. That was the cause of the addition. The major question was where to put it."

Mr. S recalled numerous studies were done to verify this need. "Sherwood is one of the faster growing communities in the county. That was shown by the surveys, hence, the requirement for more space." Mr. S felt that many issues were taken into consideration.

Mr. S acknowledged that the renovations project was under discussion at public meetings for at least two years before the final action was taken. "Substantial newspaper publicity was afforded." He felt that the situation in Sherwood was somewhat unusual.

> This was a rare occasion where the public was going for the higher cost situation. This was the other way around. The school board opted for the addition which was a substantially lesser cost than a new building. The public, which protested, wanted a new building. It was an oddity.

Mr. S felt that the board had explored not only the cost factor but transportation and educational opportunities, before making its decision. The board felt that educationally there would be little or no difference and that the cost outweighed the central location.

> The public apparently did not agree. In situations where you do hear from the public, you only hear a small portion of the public, which feels itself either threatened or impacted in some way. The real public never shows up. The ones that show up have an interest. That interest, in general, is not consistent with the feeling of the public at large. But how do you determine the feeling at large?

Mr. S did not feel that a referendum was the answer to that question because of the complexity of the issue.

> There were a couple of problems. A knowledge of many facts has to be disseminated and I don't know how to do that. You have to convince the Board of Elections to put it on the ballot. It could not be binding and unless you have an important cause to show, it won't even be put on the ballot. How do you frame the question? How do you put forth the basis of facts? What is the issue? That's the problem I have with the referendum.

Mr. S felt that the renovations project was the issue in the school board election of 1987. He is not a district resident. "I don't know what impelled the voting public to cast, what I deemed to be, a vote against the renovation project, because they unseated the directors who were in support of it." Mr. S did not believe that there were any real reasons educationally.

> I don't know how you have a better education in one area, rather than another. I don't think that was the issue. It was an issue that a lot of people contended that the school board had not properly communicated to the public what it proposed to do, and have input from the public. I don't think that was correct. The problem was the school board had a lot of input but chose to disregard it.

Mr. S felt that the decision to renovate the high school was related to the defeat of the three incumbent board members. "It was a one issue election. Very simple. You had reputable, well thought-of people. I think they were defeated on the building issue."

Mr. W

Mr. W is an architect and a partner in the firm of D&W. This is the firm which was commissioned to do the original feasibility study for the high school project in 1985. Mr. W was directly involved in developing the feasibility study and represented his firm in presenting the study at the November 25. 1985 public meeting.

Mr. W felt that lack of classroom space was the major condition which led to the perceived need for a building project. He also remembered the need for recreation space, a swimming pool, upgrading the science labs, and investigation of possible code violations in the 1931 building as being primary reasons that the board was looking toward renovations.

Mr. W stated that his firm was charged with looking at the senior high school building and bringing it up to standard. Other ideas were, "kicked around, but that wasn't really our assignment. It was mainly to evaluate the feasibility of doing this project. I don't remember how far we might have looked into other options."

One other option which the feasibility study investigated was a possible "flip-flop" of the junior high and senior high school buildings. However, it was soon found that neither the site, nor the auditorium, nor the cafeteria were big enough. "Key functions were inadequate."

There was a two-page summary in the feasibility study giving a cost estimate analysis for a new school. The estimated cost was 21.8 million dollars. This estimate did not include the cost of purchasing land. One reason that Mr. W gave as to why a new school was not investigated in the detail which the other two options were was that his firm only had $10,000 to work with, and they ran out of money. However, he stated,

> I don't think the board at the time was interested in opening up something like that. There was a preference toward the idea of renovating. I think we looked at the other options just to support the idea that renovations made sense.

The firm of D & W was not hired to complete the plans for the project. The final project costs were substantially over their initial estimate of twelve million dollars.

> Of course we always felt they should have hired us for the project. We would have had a little more embarrassment by going that high, having done the report. We would have tried a little harder to keep it down. The next architect really didn't have a sense of obligation to work within the limits.

Mr. W represented his firm and presented the feasibility study at the November 1985 public meeting. He described the tone of the meeting as "reserved skepticism." "I sensed that the public was skeptical of the idea. They didn't openly oppose very much at all. They weren't antagonistic."

Mr. W thought that the question of a new high school did come up during the question and answer period of the meeting. He felt that the general reaction was that the district would need to spend much more money. "We looked at it enough to know that this [renovations] was a better deal."

Mr. W was aware of the controversy which arose from the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school.

> If they had said to us, "Here's a situation where we want to look at at least three options, and one would include serious consideration toward a new high school," we might have approached it a little more in-depth. But we were focusing on one project and looked at the other two options very loosely.
>
> It is not out of the question that we may not have been completely objective ourselves, because it's possible we felt that had the project gone

> ahead we had a good chance of doing it. Whereas if they decided on a new school, they might have selected any architect. As it turned out, we didn't get this job anyway.
>
> We thought we had a better chance since we did the study. I don't know if we were absolutely objective. Maybe we should have gone to somebody and said, "I think you'd be better off getting a new school." I don't remember for sure, but I know we focused all of our energies on this one option.

Analysis of Research Questions

The following is a topical analysis of the events surrounding the high school construction project. Each topic is presented as it applies to the research questions of the study.

Reasearch Question 1

What socio-economic conditions were present within the community at the time of the perceived need for a renovations project?

The student population of the Sherwood School District at the beginning of the 1988-89 school year was 4,676. The total assessment for the district for the same school year was eighty four million dollars. According to the district Long Range Plan (1986-1991) and based on the 1980 Census Data Summary, the district is 98.4 percent white, the average income per family is $24,144 and 63.8 percent of the population are high school graduates.

The Sherwood School District lies in a county where

Republicans outnumber Democrats by a two to one margin. The County Board of Elections reported that that within the Sherwood School District, 78 percent of the voters are registered Republican.

In determining what socio-economic conditions were present within the community at the time of the perceived need for a renovations project, the researcher used information obtained from questions based on Kirkendall's eleven social and economic indicators that could predict the road to incumbent defeat. Kirkendall mentioned in his limitations that he selected these indicators from approximately three hundred potential indicators after measures of the indicators were derived and on the basis of a visual inspection of the measures of potential indicators. His purpose was to determine how well they appeared to discriminate between school districts which had experienced incumbent school board member defeat and those which had not. He emphasized that the best discriminations between change and no-change districts were made when socio-economic and political indicators were used together. Kirkendall drew no conclusions regarding the actual measure of the indicators. They were investigated as part of this study in order to demonstrate that socio-economic change had taken place in the Sherwood school community.

The following information was found:

Sherwood School District
Assessed Valuation Per Net Average Membership

Year	Net Average Membership	Assessed Valuation	Assessed Valuation/ Net Ave Membership
1977-78	5317	49,500,000	9,309
1978-79	5110	62,010,300 *	12,135
1979-80	4828	62,692,350	12,985
1980-81	4599	65,979,380	14,346
1981-82	4535	67,500,000	14,884
1982-83	4435	70,000,000	15,969
1983-84	4439	71,662,520	16,143
1984-85	4491	73,925,370	16,460
1985-86	4449	77,400,020	17,397

*county-wide reassessment

The above data provided the answers to Kirkendall's eleven social and economic indicators found below.

A. What was the percent change in net average membership over the three year period, 1982-83 to 1985-86? 0.3 percent

B. What was the percent change in net average membership over the three year period, 1980-81 to 1983-84? -3.5 percent

C. What was the percent change in net average membership over the six year period, 1977-78 to 1983-84? -16.5 percent

D. What was the percent change in net average

membership over the eight year period, 1977-78 to 1985-86?
-16.3 percent

The data indicate that the Sherwood School District had been experiencing declining enrollment for a period of up to eight years prior to the election of 1987. However, during the three year period immediately prior to the election the district experienced a slight upswing.

Increases or decreases in net average membership represent changes in the need for school housing, teachers, supplies and so forth. These changes represent potential pressures on the school board. These data are consistent with the interview data which revealed that fifteen of the twenty-four key participants interviewed recalled lack of space and student enrollment projections as being a reason for the perceived need for a building project.

E. What was the percent change in assessed valuation over the three year period, 1977-78 to 1980-81?
32.3 percent

F. What was the percent change in assessed valuation over the six year period, 1977-78 to 1983-84?
44.8 percent

G. What was the percent change in assessed valuation over the eight year period, 1977-78 to 1985-86?
56.4 percent

The data indicate a steady increase in the assessed valuation in the district. The largest increase occurred in the year immediately prior to the election of 1987. The Sherwood School District is a "bedroom community." Very little of the assessed value of the district can be attributed to business. A considerable portion of the district is still used for agricultural purposes. The local municipalities which comprise the district are strictly zoned. These regulations have led to development along lines intended to balance residential, commercial and industrial growth, in order to protect the investment of property owners and to channel future development into desired directions.

Percentage change in assessed valuation over a period of time is a measure of changes in the wealth of a school district community. It reflects new building, changes in land use, and changes in assessment practices. These factors will have an impact on the socio-economic conditions of a community. Kirkendall found this indicator to come the "closest of all socio-economic indicators to being an indication of changes in the cost of housing and therefore to changes in social class status."[119] Several of the key participants mentioned the changing community and its impact on the events surrounding the construction project.

H. What was the change in assessed valuation per net average membership over the three year period, 1982-83 to 1985-86?

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[119] Kirkendall, op. cit., p. 105.

$1627

I. What was the change in assessed valuation per net average membership over the three year period, 1980-81 to 1983-84?

$1797

J. What was the percent change in assessed valuation per net average membership over the three year period, 1982-83 to 1985-86?

10.3 percent

K. What was the percent change in assessed valuation per net average membership over the three year period, 1981-82 to 1984-85?

10.6 percent

The data indicate that the assessed valuation per net average membership in the Sherwood School District has also been rising quite steadily. This is an indicator of a community's financial ability to support its schools. Change in this indicator represents the magnitude of change in the community's ability to financially support its schools. It represents a change in the socio-economic composition of the district. Again, these data are consistent with interview data from key participants. Several key participants mentioned a change in the socio-economic composition of the school district community, particularly in the southern end of the district.

Research Question 2

How did the school board reach the decision to renovate the high school building as opposed to building a new high school?

2a. What conditions were present which led the school board to the perceived need for a building project?

Seventeen of the twenty-four key participants identified a future lack of space as being a condition which led to the perceived need for the building project. This, however, was secondary to the deterioration of the building itself. The annual tour of the building and maintenance committee revealed a need to replace windows in the 1931 building for energy saving purposes. It was the recommendation of that committee which led to the perceived need for what ended up to be a 17.9 million dollar project.

2b. What procedures were used to verify the need for a building project?

Sixteen of the twenty-four key participants mentioned the feasibility study as a procedure that was used by the district to verify the need for a building project. There were mixed emotions regarding the feasibility study among board members, candidates, and community members. One community member mentioned the rumor that D&W were told what to come up with. One board member said she felt the decision had been made prior to the feasibility study. Mr. W, of D & W, was clear that the firm was asked to evaluate the feasibility of a renovations project. They focused all of their energies on one option and looked only very superficially at the other two options.

The feasibility study itself only mentions two options in its preface: renovating the existing high school and converting one of the junior high schools to a senior high school (flip-flop.) There is, however, in the Appendix of the feasibility study, a "Cost Estimate for a New School." It consists of two pages, estimating the cost of a new high school to be 21.8 million dollars. This estimate did not include the acquisition of land.

One-half of the key participants mentioned that demographic studies had been done to verify the need for a building project. The district did indeed commission several studies on population growth including a local study, one done by the State Department of Education and one done by the State Economy league. All three studies indicated that the district would be undergoing varying degrees of growth over the next ten to fifteen years.

Research Question 3

How was the public involved in the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school?

3a. What procedures did the school district use to solicit public participation in the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school?

Answers to this question varied, according to the perception of the person being interviewed. Of the members of the former board, four felt that the fact that the renovations were discussed at public board meetings was a form of soliciting public participation. Three of the members of the former board stated that the district did nothing to solicit public participation.

Each of the school board candidates seemed to be aware of the public presentations which were being held, or they were informed of happenings in the newspaper, but they did not feel that these were adequate ways to solicit public participation.

None of the candidates mentioned the November 1985 public meeting when the feasibility study was presented. None of them were present at that meeting. However, four of the members of the former board mentioned that meeting as the public's chance for input into the decision. Those directors felt public reaction at that meeting was very positive.

The community members were scattered in their reactions to this question. They mentioned several ideas: public board meetings, the November 1985 meeting, press releases, public presentations, and the Act 34 hearings. None of the community members seemed totally convinced that the district had done a good job of soliciting public input. Two of the teachers mentioned a survey of the teachers that was done very early on. They felt that that input was later disregarded totally.

3b. How did the public become involved in the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school?

Again, the answer to this question varied according to the perception of the key participant being interviewed, as to when the decision to renovate was made. There were those who contended that the decision to renovate was made before the feasibility study was done. Therefore, they felt the public was not involved. Those who felt the decision to renovate was made the night of the presentation of the feasibility study, felt that the public was involved that evening.

In terms of different ways that the public got involved, or what it actually was that got the public involved, there were a number of interesting responses. Five of the nine members of the former board mentioned Mr. SB8 as someone who got the public involved. Four members of the former board mentioned that the public got involved by coming out to board meetings and speaking. Four also brought up the petitions and the call for the referendum as a form of public involvement.

The former board was obviously split on the referendum issue. The typical distinction was between those board members who felt they were elected to represent the public, and those board members who felt they were elected to make the best informed decision on the public's behalf.

The candidates for school board mentioned all of the above methods of involvement plus personally contacting board members, speaking at Act 34 hearings, attendance and questioning at Candidate's Night and participating in the Parents for Quality Education Group.

All five of the community members mentioned going to school board meetings as a way that the public got involved. Community members must have perceived that this was a means of formally giving input, even though the general public rarely does. Those community members who were interviewed as key participants would fall into Almond's "attentive public" group. They were obviously informed and interested in the issue.

Of the different ways mentioned that the public became involved in the decision to renovate, only one, contacting board members, was of an informal nature. The rest were of a more formal nature, either initiated by the district (School Board Meetings, Act 34 hearings, Candidate's Night), or initiated by the public themselves (petitions, call for referendum, Parents for Quality Education.)

3c. At what level did the public participate in the decision to renovate according to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation?

The purpose of this question was to have the key participants assign a numerical value as to where on the "Ladder of Citizen Participation" they felt that the citizens of Sherwood participated in the decision to renovate the high school. Rather than simply looking at: Did they particiapte? Yes or No? This question attempted to answer the question: To what degree did the citizens participate?

Each of the key participants were given the "Ladder of Citizen Participation" and Arnstein's definitions, found on page 66 and also in the interview guide in Appendix C. Each key participant was asked the question in the following manner: "Please consider Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation and the accompanying definitions. At what level did the citizens of Sherwood participate in the decision to renovate?"

If a key participant gave more than one response, the researcher recorded the average of the responses. For example, if a respondent felt that both four and five applied, the recorded answer was 4.5. There were two members of the former board who responded, "They weren't even on the ladder," and , "I don't see any here." Those responses were recorded as zeros.

The range of responses was from zero to five. Not one key participant felt that the citizens of Sherwood had any degree of citizen power as described in the "Partnership," "Delegated Power," or "Citizen Control" levels. However, four of the key participants mentioned that citizens gained control by way of the election. Comments to that effect were:

Mr. SB9: "Ultimately the citizens have power over the board in terms of elections."

Mrs. PR: "The citizens spoke in the long run."

Mr. CM2: "There was no partnership, no delegated authority, no control whatsoever, until they got to the election and they threw the candidates out. That was citizen control, but it was too late."

Mr. SB7: "Number 7 is where they finally won by placing people on the board."

Of the twenty-four key participant responses, the answer most frequently given was 3.5. Seven of the respondents gave that answer. The mean was also 3.5. The median was slightly higher, 3.75.

The mean response of the pre-1987 board was 3.1 and the mean response of the post-1987 board was 3.0. There was very little difference in what the two boards perceived was happening in terms of public participation. The differences came forth in whether they perceived the public participation at that level to be good or bad. This was reflected in their comments.

Mrs. SB1: There is always a portion of the meeting for community input. I wouldn't say there was no channel for feedback, but the channel could have been wider."

Mrs. SB5: There was no channel for feedback. We informed them of their rights."

Mr. SB7: "We invited citizens' opinions with no assurance that their opinions wuld be taken into account. That's the critical part. The biggest criticism was that we gave them time to comment but we didn't listen to them."

Mr. SB8: "They were never informed of their rights or responsibilities."

Mr. SB9: "The nature of the board is that they are the decision-making authority."

Mr. SB10: "I agree that there was some informing at the meetings. I don't think it went beyond a token type of thing."

Mrs. SB11: "Number four, consultation, that happened. It was perceived more as number one, manipulation, where there was no inviting of opinions, but rather hearing the opinions was obligatory.

Mr. SB12: "They tried to placate them, but that's where it stopped."

Dr. SB13: "You'd ask questions but you'd get no answers. It presented a problem. There was no feedback."

The mean response of the community members was 3.4. Looking at Arnstein's definitions of the corresponding levels, the community members felt informed, but with either no channel for feedback or no assurance that their ideas or concerns would be taken into account. That was reflected in the comments that were made by the community members.

Mr. CM1: "I felt it was total manipulation."

Mr. CM2: "Traditionally, our school board has not wanted much citizen participation but they always rubberstamp and say they're interested in hearing opinions and then ignore them. They did this no differently."

Mrs. CM3: "Powerholders have the right. That's exactly what I saw happening. I still see that as the democratic process. I can write ten page letters, but in the long run, they make the decision. In the decision end, I don't have final say. I may have recourse, but I don't have final say. I still see that as a democratic process."

Mr. CM4: "Inviting you to give opinions with no assurance. They wouldn't guarantee a thing."

Ms. CM5: "Many times the decisions that needed to be made

> in the name of citizen participation were directed. A recommendation would be made and citizens would say it looked good. Other options weren't looked at."

Research Question 4

What effects did the decision to renovate have on the school board election of November 1987, as perceived by the successful incumbent, the defeated incumbents, and the successful non-incumbent candidates?

4a. Was the renovations project an issue in the school board election of November 1987, as perceived by the successful incumbent, the defeated incumbents, and the successful non-incumbent candidates?

The response to this question was overwhelmingly "Yes." Twenty-three of the twenty-four key participants felt that the renovations project was an issue in the school board election of 1987. Nine went so far as to say it was the only issue. Responses ranged from, "Wow, was it!" to "It was the paramount issue." Only one respondent, Mr. CM4, answered no, and then qualified his answer, "because most of us knew that it was settled. All we wanted to do now was get rid of the lousy bums who did it."

The successful incumbent, the defeated incumbents and the successful non-incumbent candidates all recognized that the renovations project was the issue of the day. It was being talked about on the street. It was being talked about at the polls. Here are some of their comments.

Mrs. SB1: "I spent the day at Sherwood #2. By 9:00 a.m. I could tell it wasn't looking good. Mr. CM4 had his group of senior citizens, one at every poll. They had phoned people to come out and vote for Mr. SB10, Mrs. SB11, Mr. SB12 and Dr. SB13."

Mr. SB3: "Every school board in Sherwood, in the history of Sherwood, that has voted for a new school, has been voted out of office, every case."

Mr. SB4: "That was such a strong issue. I can't remember when an issue on the school board was as strong as that."

Mrs. SB5: "It was the most heated school board election that I've ever been aware of. That was the topic of conversation for anyone who was old enough to vote."

Mr. SB6: "The momentum that had built at that time was hard to counteract. In a building project, you're damned if you do, damned if you don't."

Mr. SB7: "This was the issue at the polls. I worked at three different places. The building was the issue at the polls."

Mr. SB9: "I was asked about it. I would get occasional phone calls."

Mr. SB10: "We sent out a letter. We specifically addressed issues. It was the key issue."

Mr. SB12: "Quite frankly, it was probably the only way that a minority party was able to get elected on the board. I was only the second democrat to be elected."

Dr. SB13: "It was the first time that the school board saw that the citizens were against what they were trying to do."

There were those directors who recognized that there were other issues, which grew out of the renovations issue.

Mr. SB2: "You had a political situation where the issue switched from the idea of the renovation itself, to the idea, 'We're going to have our way - out with the bums.'"

Mr. SB4: "They were going to remove the people. They were not going to let these people make any further decisions if they could help it."

Mr. SB8: "They were walking into the polling place with an idea in their mind that no one was going to change. That idea was going to be expressed on the ballot."

Mr. SB10: "At that time it was an issue of several things, one of which was representation."

4b. Was the decision to renovate the high school directly responsible for the defeat of the three incumbent school board members in the school board election of November 1987, as perceived by the successful incumbent, the defeated incumbents, and the successful non-incumbent candidates?

Of the defeated incumbent candidates, two felt that the decision to renovate was responsible for their defeat. The third, Mr. SB2, looked at it in a slightly different manner. "It was the issue, but not the real reason. It was the issue that caused us to look bad. They capitalized on the fact that these rascals weren't doing what they wanted them to do."

Mrs. SB5, the only successful incumbent candidate, felt the decision to renovate was responsible for the defeat. "People were outraged that they were told they had no say in how we were to spend their money."

The four successful non-incumbent candidates agreed that the decision to renovate was related to the defeat of the three incumbent candidates. Mr. SB11 felt however, "I don't think it was so much the decision to renovate the high school that caused this to happen, but the process that was used." Mr. SB12 said,

> The people were so displeased with the project, they showed what the public can do when they get annoyed. It shows that the public does have an effect on the political process. It's obvious. A lot of politicians are unaware that that can occur. It doesn't happen often, but given the right set of circumstances, it can occur.

Other key participants all felt that the decision to renovate the high school was, in some way, responsible for the defeat of the three incumbent board members.

Mr. SB4: "I think they should have been more compassionate. They should have listened to the public. It was unbelievable how the public showed their dissappointment in the directors."

Mr. SB8: "The people thought they were not being heard."

Mr. SB7: "The renovations project was the cause of the defeat of the three incumbents."

Mr. SB9: "I think it's interesting that the five people elected that year were all in opposition."

Mrs. PR: "Without a doubt. The people were out who were for renovations. It dealt with public opinion."

Mr. CM1: "This movement proved that something could happen besides the republicans squashing the democrats all the time."

Mr. CM2: "I think a small vocal group thought they could get the project stopped. I don't think anyone else realistically did though."

Ms. CM5: "The public saw the attitude of the Board members. There was a lack of trust based on a lack of communication."

Mr. S: "It was a one issue election. Very simple. You had reputable, well thought-of people. I think they were defeated on the building issue."

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter contains a summary of the study, the findings which are based on the data collected, a set of conclusions based on the findings, and recommendations. The results of this study should serve to give school officials a better understanding of the politics of school-community interaction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine and analyze the politics of school-community interaction with respect to a high school construction project. The study reported on the events surrounding a particular school board's decision to renovate its high school building, and how these events related to a particular theory of incumbent school board member defeat: the dissatisfaction theory. Emphasis was placed on how the public was involved in the decision to renovate and the political after-effects of this decision.

Procedures

The focusing of attention on one community's activities for a period of time when critical decisions are being made concerning a school construction project, should create a better understanding of the political forces contributing to these decisions. For this reason, the case study approach was the method of inquiry selected for this study.

In a qualitative approach to research the objective is to understand the meaning of an experience. The dissatisfaction theory of democratic participation in school governance provided a theoretical framework for this study. The researcher was the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing all data.

Data collection occurred in two phases. The first phase was the compilation of the historic record by collecting and systematically analyzing selected available documents in order to accurately present the case. The second phase of data collection was the conducting of in-depth interviews of key participants in the study. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to discover as much as possible from the respondents.

Data Analysis

The data collected were reported using three methods: (1) A chronological compilation of the historic record in narrative form, (2) A narrative summary of each interview conducted, and (3) An ex post facto topical analysis of the events guided by the research questions summarizing the data analysis phase. Major findings, conclusions and recommendations were determined after in-depth analysis of the data.

Findings

The findings of the study are presented as they apply to the research questions of the study.

1. What socio-economic conditions were present within the community at the time of the perceived need for a renovations project?

The Sherwood School district had been experiencing declining enrollment from 1974-75 through 1983-84 of approximately 25 percent. However, the 1984-85 school year brought an increase of fifty students and enrollment projections indicating a potential nine percent increase in student population by 1990 and a 36 percent increase by 1995.

The assessed valuation for the district showed a steady increase for the eight year period prior to the election of 1987. The increase was approximately 25 percent for that period, representing substantial growth in the area as well as an increased cost of homes.

The assessed valuation per net average membership also rose substantially during the same eight year period. This factor rose 43 percent, representing a rise in the district's ability to financially support its schools.

These figures represent change in the community of Sherwood. This change was consistent with statements made by key participants relative to the increasing population and new families moving into the district, particularly in the southern part of the district.

The Sherwood School Board was typically unchanging. The district lies in a county where Republicans outnumber Democrats by a two to one margin. The County Board of Elections reported that within the Sherwood School District, 78 percent of the voters are registered Republicans. Prior to the 1987 school board election, there had been only one Democrat elected to the board. According to key participants interviewed, Republican candidates were hand picked, and incumbent defeat was rare.

2. How did the school board reach the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school?

The Sherwood School District works within a committee structure. The building and maintenance committee makes an annual tour of each building each year. The annual tour of the high school building in the Spring of 1985 revealed a need for replacement of windows in the 1931 building. It was from this committee that the idea of a brainstormening session came forth.

In April of 1985, the administration and school board of the Sherwood School District held a brainstorming session where they looked at facilities and education into the year 2000. It was this brainstorming session and the recommendation of the building and maintenance committee which led the board to hire the architectural firm of D&W to do a feasibility study of possible renovations and additions to the high school.

D&W presented the feasibility study at a well advertised public meeting on November 25, 1985. The meeting was well attended and most of the key participants who were in attendance remember a very positive tone.

In the minds of some of the key participants, the decision to renovate seemed to be made prior to the feasibility study being done. In the opinion of other key participants, the decision to renovate was made the night of the presentation. The school board minutes reflect an indication that there would be hearings and public meetings before any final decision was made. The board proceeded to interview and unanimously hire an architect for the senior high addition/renovations project.

3. How was the public involved in the decision to renovate the high school building as opposed to building a new high school?

The answer to this question depends on when the decision to renovate was actually made. If it is accepted that the decision to renovate was made at the November 1985 meeting or even prior to that, then there was very little opportunity for public involvement. If it is accepted that the decision to renovate was made the night of the presentation of the feasibility study, then that meeting was the public's opportunity for involvement. The November 1985 presentation meeting was well advertised, and there was input given by residents, teachers and students that night.

As the building and maintenance committee proceeded with its plans, the rest of the board was updated at public meetings which the press always covered. The January 26, 1987 meeting was the first time that Mr. SB8 voiced his objections to the project in public and that seemed to be a turning point in the scheme of events.

The Spring of 1987 saw much public involvement on the renovations issue. People spoke in opposition to the project during the public commentary portion of almost every board meeting. The public presented the board with a petition signed by over 1200 taxpayers calling for a reconsideration of the decision to renovate. Taxpayers spoke at all three Act 34 hearings both in opposition to and in favor of the renovations project. There was a public call, followed by a motion from Mr. SB8, for a referendum on the renovations project on the May Primary Ballot. Many members of the community contacted board members individually.

When asked at what level the citizens of Sherwood were able to participate in the decision to renovate according to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, most of the key participants responded level three, informing, or level four, consultation. According to Arnstein's definitions of the levels, the key participants felt that they were informed and even invited to give opinions, but either there was no channel for feedback, or the citizens' ideas were not taken into account. These feelings were verified by the key participants comments throughout the interviews.

4. What effects did the decision to renovate have on the School Board Election of November 1987, as perceived by the successful incumbent, the defeated incumbents, and the successful non-incumbent candidates?

All of the key participants agreed that the high school renovations project was an issue in the school board election of 1987. It was discussed openly during the campaign and at the polls. Many key participants felt it was the only issue of the election.

All of the key participants agreed that the decision to renovate was directly related, if not directly responsible for the defeat of the three incumbent school board members in the 1987 election. State figures reveal that in 1987, 12.5 percent of incumbent directors were defeated for re-election. Sherwood experienced a 75 percent defeat of incumbent board members. The three defeated incumbents were in favor of the renovations project. The one successful incumbent had voted in opposition to the project. The four successful non-incumbent candidates had been quite vocal in their opposition to the renovations project.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based upon the analysis of the findings:

1. The decision to renovate Sherwood High School as opposed to building a new high school was made in the fall of 1985. Although not formally voted upon at the November 25, 1985 meeting, in the minds of the members of the building and maintenance committee, and in the minds of the majority of board members, there was a committment to the renovations project at that time.

2. The public did have input into the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school. The board did what it had done "traditionally" to afford the public the opportunity for input. This occurred during the public commentary portion of the public meetings. The board did not specifically solicit input or participation from the public in any manner which deviated from what it had traditionally done.

3. The Sherwood School District community was undergoing socio-economic changes. These changes occurred primarily in the southern part of the district. This group tended to be the most vocal in opposition to the project.

4. One school board member voiced his objection to the renovations project in January 1987. This single dissenting vote was a turning point in the project, in that very shortly thereafter public interest in and opposition to the

project increased tremendously.

5. The community members interviewed felt that they should have had more of a say in the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school. They perceived that they were not being heard and that their only recourse was through the ballot box. The majority of the board members felt that they had made an informed decision to renovate the high school and were committed to that decision.

6. The renovations project became the issue in the school board election of 1987. Opponents of the project stirred up community concern with petitions, mailings, coffee klatches, and personal contact. They were extremely organized in their efforts. This organized effort in opposition to the renovations project made a difference in the school board election of 1987.

7. The decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new high school was directly responsible for the defeat of three incumbent board members in the school board election of 1987. This occurred in spite of the fact that ground had already been broken and that the decision was irreversible. It occurred because the majority of the voting public wanted to give the board members a message of dissatisfaction with their decision to renovate and with the degree of public participation in this decision. The dissatisfaction theory of local school governance was found

to hold true in the Sherwood School District.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of this study.

1. School boards should be aware of, and in fact study on a regular basis, demographic trends in their school district community. Changes in population, assessed valuation and socio-economic status of district residents can reveal a changing posture in the community toward education and educational decision-making.

2. School-community interaction should happen by design and not by default. School boards should design policies for dealing with public input and participation in decision-making so that it happens in a fair and consistent manner. School boards should seek to find the level at which the public desires to participate in the decision-making process.

3. School Boards can no longer rely on "traditional" methods of informing the public and soliciting public opinion. If public input does not come forth voluntarily the district should take an active role in soliciting participation of key communicators. This "attentive public" may change according to the issue, however it will provide a core of informed citizens who have had some involvement in the matter.

4. Certainly, all school board decisions should not be

expected to be unanimous. However, school boards should be aware of the credibility questions raised in the minds of the public when they see a split vote. Even one board member who is opposed to an issue, can cause sufficient doubt in the minds of the voting public, and force a more public airing of the matter.

5. School board members should be aware of the dissatisfaction theory of local school governance and its effects on the politics of school-community interaction. Dissatisfaction with a single issue may set off a series of events including incumbent school board member defeat. Knowledge of the dissatisfaction theory may not change the way a particular board member votes on a particular issue, but it may explain some of the political after-effects such decisions.

6. Many decisions which school board members make have the potential of becoming political issues. These decisions cannot and should not be made in a vacuum. The manner in which school officials deal with the increasing public outcry for more participation in this decision-making process may well have an effect on their own political future.

7. School board members should be sensitive to the types of issues which are more likely to cause an emotional reaction in their school district community. School construction, school closings and school district

realignment are examples of such issues. These issues may cause a such a split in the school district community so as to place the board in a "no win" situation. This is all the more reason to deal with these issues openly and to involve the public. Information and involvement create interest, and interest leads to support.

8. Superintendents should also be informed and aware of the above recommendations. Dissatisfaction theorists have shown the relation between incumbent school board member defeat and involuntary superintendent turnover.

9. Recommended for further study would be research into other issues which have resulted in sufficient dissatisfaction so as to cause incumbent school board member defeat. Such research would help to create a knowledge base of politically explosive issues and hopefully knowledge on how to handle these issues in a better manner.

10. Also recommended for further study would be a duplication of this case study in another district. Case Study research would benefit from a similiar study where the issues are similiar but where the district may differ in some way.

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Appendix A

Kirkendall's Eleven Social and Economic Indicators

1. What was the percent change in net average membership over the three year period, 1982-1983 to 1985-1986?

2. What was the percent change in net average membership over the three year period, 1980-1981 to 1983-1984?

3. What was the percent change in net average membership over the six year period, 1977-1978 to 1983-1984?

4. What was the percent change in net average membership over the eight year period, 1977-1978 to 1985-1986?

5. What was the percent change in assessed valuation over the three year period, 1977-1978 to 1980-1981?

6. What was the percent change in assessed valuation over the six year period, 1977-1978 to 1983-1984?

7. What was the percent change in assessed valuation over the eight year period, 1977-1978 to 1985-1986?

8. What was the change in assessed valuation per net average membership over the three year period, 1982-1983 to 1985-1986?

9. What was the change in assessed valuation per net average membership over the three year period, 1980-1981 to 1983-1984?

10. What was the percent change in assessed valuation per net everage membership over the three year period, 1982-1983 to 1985-1986?

11. What was the percent change in assessed valuation per net average membership over the three year period, 1981-1982 to 1984-1985?

Appendix B
Letter of Introduction

Dear __________________,

As you are aware, I am working on my doctoral degree in educational administration from Temple University. The title of my proposed dissertation is: "A High School Construction Project: A Case Study in the Politics of School-Community Interaction." Dr. _____________ has given me permission to pursue this study.

I would appreciate the opportunity to tap your knowledge and gain from your experience regarding our construction project. I am hoping you will agree to be interviewed on this topic. I will be contacting you in the near future to set up a mutually convenient meeting time and place.

Your opinions and recollections are an important part of my research. I hope you will consider granting me an interview.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Schmieg

* This letter was sent on school district stationary. For the sake of anonymity it was not included in this appendix.

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

What conditions were present which led the school board to the perceived need for a building project?

What procedures were used to verify the need for a building project?

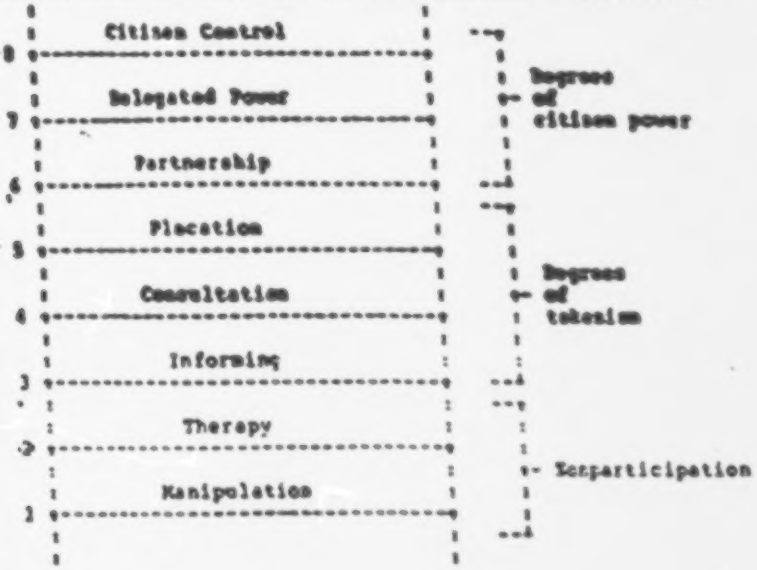
What procedures did the school district use to solicit public participation in the decision to renovate the high school as opposed to building a new one.

How did the public become involved in the decision to renovate the high school?

Please consider Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation and the following definitions. At what level did the citizens of Souderton participate in the decision to renovate?

In your opinion, was the decision to renovate the high school related to the defeat of three incumbent school board members in the school board election of November, 1987? If so, in what way?

Figure 3: Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation



1. Manipulation -- In the name of citizen participation, people are placed on rubber-stamp advisory committees or advisory boards for the express purpose of "educating" them or engineering their support.

2. Therapy -- Masquerade of involving citizens in in planning, engaging them in extensive activities, but diverting them from dealing with important matters.

3. Informing -- Informing citizens of their rights, responsibilities and options with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation.

4. Consultation -- Inviting citizen's opinions with no assurance that citizen concerns and ideas will be taken into account.

5. Placation -- Citizens begin to have some degree of influence. Allowing citizens to advise or plan but retain for powerholders the right the judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice.

6. Partnership -- Power is redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. Agreeing to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses.

7. Delegated Power -- Citizens achieving dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or program. Citizens hold significant cards to assure accountability of the program to them.

8. Citizen Control -- Citizens demand that degree of control which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects and be able to negotiate the conditions under which "outsiders" may change them.

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APPENDIX D

Key Participants

Pseudonym	Date of Interview
Defeated Incumbents:	
Mrs. SB1	July 27, 1989
Mr. SB2	July 11, 1989
Mr. SB3	June 28, 1989
Retired at End of Term:	
Mr. SB4	July 10, 1989
Successful Incumbent:	
Mrs. SB5	July 26, 1989
Not Up For Re-Election:	
Mr. SB6	July 7, 1989
Mr. SB7	July 5, 1989
Mr. SB8	June 28, 1989
Mr. SB9	July 28, 1989
Successful Non-Incumbents:	
Mr. SB10	July 26, 1989
Mrs. SB11	July 27, 1989
Mr. SB12	Aug. 16, 1989
Dr. SB13	July 13, 1989
Administration:	
Dr. S1	Aug. 1, 1989
Dr. S2	July 31, 1989
Mrs. PR	June 30, 1989
Community Members:	
Mr. CM1	July 13, 1989
Mr. CM2	Aug. 8, 1989
Mrs. CM3	Aug. 4, 1989
Mr. CM4	July 11, 1989
Ms. CM5	Aug. 10, 1989
Architects:	
Mr. A1	July 12, 1989
Mr. A2	July 12, 1989
Mr. W	Feb. 2, 1990
Solicitor:	
Mr. S	Aug. 7, 1989

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Signature: Patricia A Schmieg	Printed Name/Position/Title: Dr Patricia A Schmieg	
Organization/Address: Council Rock High School South 2002 Rock Way Holland PA 18966	Telephone: 215-504-6400	FAX:
	E-Mail Address: pschmieg@crsd.org	Date: 10/15/02

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